



children first.



Puerto Ricans bathed in a natural spring in the hill town of Toa Alta. ©Victor J. Blue/New York Times

HURRICANE MARIA: PUERTO RICO

Overview of UNICEF USA's Response

SEPTEMBER 2017

*“The devastation in Puerto Rico has set us back nearly 20 to 30 years.”
-Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González*

Overview

Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on Wednesday, September 20, as a Category 4 storm. The powerful storm left approximately 3.4 million people without power, and the island’s energy grid all but destroyed. Without electricity, there is no power to pump water into homes, leaving almost half the population without potable water. Many roads remain scattered with debris, and bridges need to be assessed for safety. This has caused access to the hardest hit areas more difficult. In just a few hours, Maria wiped out approximately 80 percent of the crop value in Puerto Rico – making it one of the costliest storms to hit the island – an estimated loss of \$780 million in agriculture yields. **Governor Ricardo A. Rosselló of Puerto Rico said the island was on the brink of a “humanitarian crisis”, and predicts a long road to recovery.**

UNICEF USA Responds

UNICEF USA is deeply concerned about the needs of all children affected by this natural disaster, **especially the most vulnerable** – which includes displaced and unaccompanied children, in addition to their families who have been devastated by Hurricane Maria. **UNICEF USA is committed to putting children first, and will leverage its resources to support the most vulnerable children.**

UNICEF USA will provide family dignity and hygiene kits for the children and families affected by Hurricane Maria. The kit will provide a family with basic, yet much needed essential supplies such as a water bucket with lid, water containers, soap, toothpaste, water purification tablets, detergent and sanitary pads. This will help children and their families keep clean and healthy, protecting them from disease which can occur after such a disaster like this, where there is a disruption of a safe water supply and loss of equipment and infrastructure.

With your support, UNICEF USA can provide 12,000 family dignity and hygiene kits to 12,000 families (typically two adults and three children) for one month. The total cost for 12,000 kits is \$336,000. The cost of one family dignity and hygiene kit for one family is \$28.



The Way Forward

During any emergency, such as the case with Hurricane Maria, children bear the biggest brunt and are at high risk of violence, abuse, chronic illness and spread of contagious diseases. UNICEF USA wants to ensure vulnerable children who were impacted by Hurricane Maria are protected and can return to some sense of normalcy as soon as possible. UNICEF USA will contribute to the recovery effort by working with partners to ensure the most vulnerable children and their families have what they need to stay safe and protected in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. **On behalf of the children and families in Puerto Rico, thank you for your interest and support.**

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