

# Media Update

5 October 2016

## UNICEF

Press Release

### More than 4 million children at risk as Hurricane Matthew pummels Haiti – UNICEF

**Multimedia materials will be available at:**

<http://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AMZIFM2233>

**NEW YORK/PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, 4 October 2016** – More than 4 million children may be exposed to the damage of Hurricane Matthew, UNICEF said today as the Category 4 storm made landfall on the impoverished Caribbean island.

“This is the worst storm Haiti has seen in decades and the damage will no doubt be significant,” said Marc Vincent, UNICEF Representative in Haiti. “Water-borne diseases are the first threat to children in similar situations - our first priority is to make sure children have enough safe water.”

Strong winds and torrential rains are battering the island, raising the risk of floods and landslides. The airport remains closed and children have been told to stay home from school – particularly as many schools are being used to shelter evacuees.

Haiti is still recovering from the 2010 earthquake, with 55,000 people still living in shelters. The southern coast, where the storm is expected to hit the most, is one of the poorest and most densely populated parts of the country.

In a country where less than 1 in 5 people in rural areas have access to improved sanitation and 40 per cent of people use unsafe water sources, it is feared that the hurricane will worsen an already precarious situation.

Cholera is endemic and with more than 27,000 suspected cholera cases reported already this year – an estimated one third of them children – any



damage to water and sanitation infrastructure or largescale displacement could put children and families at greater risk of infection.

UNICEF is working to support the Government's humanitarian response. Life-saving supplies for 10,000 people are in place and ready to be distributed to the most affected families in the worst hit areas. They include water bladders and chlorination tablets, hygiene kits and mosquito nets.

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#### **About UNICEF**

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

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