



Overview

Central America has been severely affected by a record-breaking hurricane season, with Category 4 Hurricane Eta raging through the region at 225 km/h at the beginning of November, followed by Category 5 Hurricane Iota just about two weeks later. The heavy rains, strong winds, flash floods and storm surges triggered by the Hurricanes have affected a total of about 8.3 million people across Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which are already hard hit by years of erratic weather patterns and more recently by the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, resulting in potentially significant catastrophic impacts. Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua were the most heavily affected countries in the region.

The Hurricanes hit at the start of the second planting season (postrera). As a result, bean and maize crops have suffered irreparable damages, causing significant harvest losses, and the agricultural livelihoods of about 727 315 families were severely affected. The livestock and fishery sectors have also been impacted, with the loss of critical assets, equipment and infrastructure.

The damage to agriculture, livestock and rural livelihoods could further worsen the food security situation in the region at a critical time, considering the upcoming lean season (March–August), when stocks are traditionally low. Many households have also lost their food reserves and are at risk of facing acute food insecurity. The vulnerability of indigenous communities, in particular, has been exacerbated due to damaged roads and bridges, increasing their isolation. Unemployment and loss of income are also expected to increase.

Vulnerable households, who mainly rely on agriculture, livestock and fishing as their main source of food and income, will likely face challenges in accessing basic needs that could lead to the adoption of negative coping mechanisms, including selling what's left of their productive assets or reducing the number of meals per day.

In a region where nearly 8 million people are projected to face high acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and Famine Early Warning Systems Network), the effects of Eta and Iota have further aggravated the situation and urgent action is needed to provide emergency livelihood support to the most vulnerable people.

Subregional Central America

Hurricanes Eta and Iota
Urgent call for assistance



to assist
333 000 people



FAO requires
USD 14.4 million

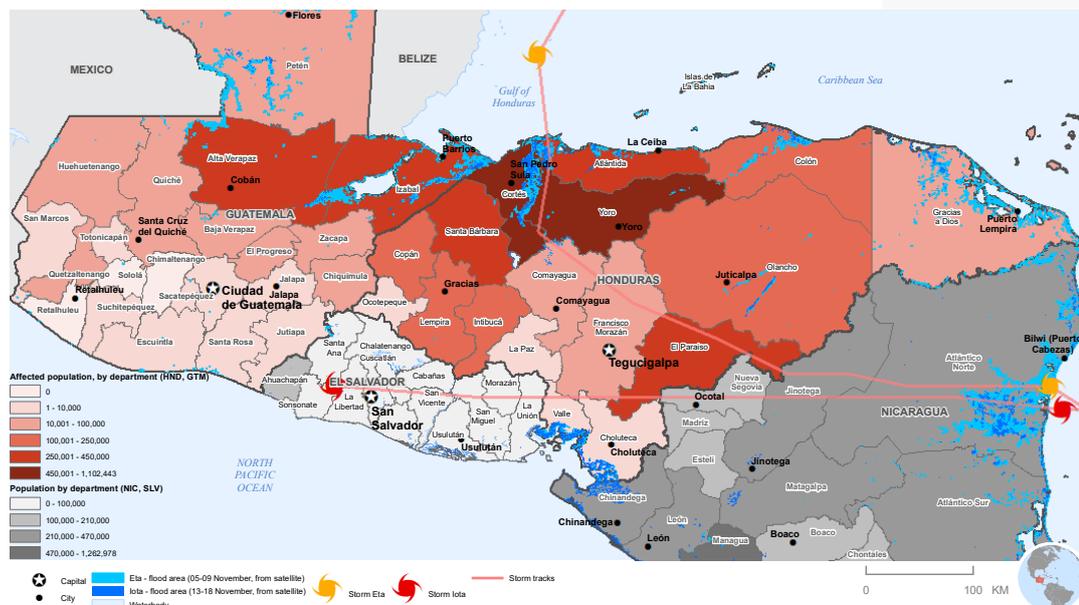


period
**December 2020–
November 2021**



Targeted countries
**Guatemala, Honduras
and Nicaragua**

Affected populations by department (November 2020)



Source: MapAction and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. 2020. *Central America: Hurricanes Eta and Iota, Honduras and Guatemala: affected population by department (30 November 2020)* [online]. [Cited 3 March 2021] https://maps.mapaction.org/dataset/97571382-e903-4ef9-ae65-af7a9371786b/resource/bfd85d6e-da9a-42d2-9fe2-e27d7e114a9d/download/ma716_ocha_ca_eta_iota_adm1_affd_eng_v2-300dpi.pdf

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Planned response

In order to respond to the immediate needs of disaster-affected populations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will conduct emergency rapid response interventions to provide vulnerable households with time-critical inputs to protect their livelihoods and food security. In collaboration with local implementing partners, FAO will work towards restoring overall food production capacities to rapidly increase food availability and access.

More specifically, FAO will provide immediate livelihood support to 60 000 vulnerable households (330 000 people) in the most affected regions of the three targeted countries: the southern and western parts of Honduras, North Caribbean Coast autonomous region and Jinotega department in Nicaragua, and Alta Verapaz and Izabal departments in Guatemala. Acutely food-insecure people who depend on agricultural activities for their livelihoods, women and indigenous peoples will be prioritized.

Objective

To provide emergency response and livelihoods recovery support to hurricane-affected smallholder farmers and fishers, including indigenous peoples, through a gender-sensitive approach, in the most affected areas of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Needs and impact assessments

In the aftermath of the disaster, FAO immediately mobilized USD 120 000 from the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities to carry out damage assessments and needs analyses in collaboration with the national and local authorities of the three countries. These evaluations are collecting, processing and analysing data in order to assess the damages and losses in the agriculture sector as well as the impact on households' food security. Preliminary results point to a worsening situation with increasing numbers of people affected and in dire need.

Situation analysis

 **8.3 million** people affected

 **1 million ha** of cropland damaged or lost

 **+190 000** livestock lost (cattle, poultry swine and small ruminants)



Planned activities

Crops

- Provide crop seeds (beans, maize and rice) according to local needs.
- Distribute vegetable seeds and short-cycle nutritious varieties (yucca, biofortified sweet potato, etc.) for immediate backyard food production, to improve household nutrition.
- Provide tools (hoes, sprayer, etc.) and fertilizers to households that have lost productive assets and equipment.
- Provide resources and technical assistance for the rehabilitation of seed processing and storage infrastructure and distribute supplies for water systems for both irrigation and household use.

Livestock

- Provide livestock production support, including livestock restocking (pigs, poultry) to small-scale livestock keepers.
- Train farmers, central veterinary authorities and local services on biosafety disposal of animal carcasses.
- Monitor existing health programmes (a prophylactic plan for disease prevention and parasites control) and contribute to a more coordinated, integrated and effective emergency response focused on animal nutrition, welfare and veterinary assistance, protecting health and preventing disruption to food systems (One Health approach).
- Strengthen detection capacities to prevent outbreaks of emerging or endemic diseases for safety restocking.

Fisheries and aquaculture

- Provide fishing gear and equipment (fishnets, crab traps, stingers, pots, longlines, baskets, thermoses, etc.) to artisanal fishers and aquafarmers.
- Provide materials to repair artisanal boats damaged by the Hurricanes (pangas, boats, launches, cayucos, canoes, etc.) to resume production and trade activities.
- Repair fishponds and provide rehabilitation material, breeding stock and technical assistance.
- Provide capacity building in alternative source of nutrition.
- Provide supplies and basic equipment, training and technical assistance for the handling, processing and marketing of fishery products.

Supporting small-scale farmers and other affected households who lost crops and productive assets from the early onset of the lean season through the primera harvest (March–September 2021) is essential to restore their livelihoods.

Ongoing response

The evaluation of damages and losses to the agriculture sector carried out in collaboration with government authorities and partner organizations will inform response priorities for FAO's immediate intervention and beneficiary identification to ensure assistance reaches the most vulnerable.

Along with the internal funds for impact needs assessments, in the aftermath of the disaster FAO allocated internal funds (USD 900 000) to implement emergency Technical Cooperation Projects in the three countries in order to cover the most urgent needs and to support the rapid recovery of food production of the most vulnerable households.

Partnerships

Activities are implemented in close collaboration with the Ministries of Agriculture, in line with the Governments' strategic responses and recovery efforts, as well as with other United Nations agencies (e.g. the World Food Programme) and Food Security Sector stakeholders (e.g. the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture).

FAO is engaging with partners at regional and national levels to scale up resource mobilization efforts to maximize response activities to address the rising needs in the aftermath of the Hurricanes.

For progressive and safe animal restocking, partnership with regional and international organizations such as the Regional Organization for Plant Protection and Animal Health, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture and the World Organisation for Animal Health is envisaged. Moreover, regular monitoring and assessment of zoonotic events will be undertaken through FAO's Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health in coordination with the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean.



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Food and Agriculture Organization
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