



Rene Artuo Lopez Roques has lived on this shoreline for 30 years, and has now lost his third house. "We cannot afford to go anywhere else."
Gregg Brekke for Corus International

SITUATION REPORT: 2020 HURRICANES IN CENTRAL AMERICA

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SITUATION OVERVIEW

After back-to-back hurricane systems followed similar paths and affected millions of lives across Central America, rapid assessments reveal a host of humanitarian needs. Honduras is particularly hard hit, where initial assessment points to most of the country's 9.1 million people affected in some way. Hurricane Eta's trudge across the country starting Nov. 3 swelled rivers, forced widescale evacuations and otherwise created the greatest humanitarian crisis in at least a generation. The scene of need was no better when Hurricane Iota hit the night of Nov. 16, where that storm pummeled men, women and children enduring its Category 4 strength under makeshift shelters. Eta's damage put 2.3 million in need of some sort of humanitarian assistance, with Iota adding at least another 365,000 waiting for help.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE NEEDS: Shelters in lower-income communities frequently do not have adequate water or sanitation facilities. Overcrowded shelters put a burden on what facilities do exist, with inadequate protective measures to prevent coronavirus spread.

SHELTER: Formal and informal shelters offer little refuge for people who have lost everything. The U.N. reports it is impossible to estimate the level of shelter need at this moment, and overcrowding makes transmission of COVID-19 a significant concern. Shelters commonly turn away those who continue to seek it, as water levels still rise even after the systems have dissipated. Even homes that have not been totally lost feature some kind of damage requiring repair, and necessitating the replacement of household goods.

ECONOMIC IMPACT: The back-to-back storms are of particular concern for Honduras' economy, where half the population reported food insecurity. The pandemic's effects on the informal labor sector have been significant, where 3 out of ever 4 workers have reported significant income loss. Much of this work is agricultural labor, and the hurricane has had a significant, negative impact on the nation's coffee and cocoa industry. Loss of income from cacao, rotting under the burden of too much moisture, will impact laborers, farmers, producers and others stakeholders in the value chain.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Lutheran World Relief works in concert with Corus International, a family of faith-based organizations delivering holistic, lasting solutions to the interconnected challenges of poverty, health care access and climate change.



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LWR RESPONSE

A Lutheran World Relief assessment team arrived November 11 to support local staff and partners. The team's focus has been in and around San Pedro Sula, Cortés Department on the northeastern coast. U.N. data indicate Cortés to be one of the two areas most heavily impacted by the hurricanes, with needs across every humanitarian sector. The goal is to procure all items locally, with support targeting 2,000 families in both urban and rural communities around San Pedro Sula (Rivera Hernandez & La Planeta) and Choloma (agricultural areas including coffee/cocoa cooperatives).

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE NEEDS: LWR aims to distribute potable water, soap, sanitary items (such as paper towels, trash bags and cleaning products), hygiene kits (including masks, antibacterial gel, face shields, etc) to 2,000 people seeking refuge at emergency shelters.

SHELTER: The LWR shelter response will focus on both community shelters and private homes. The response will include distribution of the most urgently needed items such as kitchen supplies, lamps, small appliances to boil water, pots, blankets and mattresses. The focus will be on the most urgent needs and ensuring that people are able to return to their residences as safety considerations allow.

ECONOMIC IMPACT: Per its mandate, LWR prioritizes assistance to the most vulnerable communities. In this emergency, COVID-19 and other concerns impact the definition of vulnerability, to include people who are leaving shelters for fear of COVID-19 infection (the aged or those with immunodeficiencies; single mother-headed households; families with more than four children; families with someone with special needs or a disability; families that have recently lost income (including coffee and cocoa farms); families escaping violence, abuse. LWR will also target coffee/cacao farmers from its USDA-funded MOCCA project. While more robust support will be needed for livelihood recovery in the coffee and cacao sector, LWR will first address the need for urgent water, sanitation, hygiene and furnishing assistance aimed at returning laborers, famers and other stakeholders to their homes.



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