

El Niño Phenomenon in the Americas Region

Situation Report #1

14 September 2026 · Information available through September 14, 2026



Organización
Panamericana
de la Salud



Organización
Mundial de la Salud
Región de las Américas

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 24 June, the Public Health Situation Analysis: El Niño in the Americas, 2026–2027, was published, highlighting the main hydrometeorological and environmental hazards associated with the El Niño phenomenon and their implications for public health (1).
- El Niño continues to strengthen: the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) raised the probability of a “very strong” event during the fall and winter of 2026–2027 to over 90%. Sea surface temperature anomalies in the eastern equatorial Pacific exceeded +2 °C (2).
- These conditions create a regional public health risk scenario, with varying manifestations across different subregions. Eight countries/territories in the Region have issued official emergency or alert declarations, at the national and/or subnational levels, due to hazards associated with El Niño.
- In Central America, the most clearly documented health impact of the period continues to be food insecurity in the Central American Dry Corridor (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador), consistent with the expected pattern of drought (1,3–5).
- In the Andean Region, Colombia presents one of the most complex risk profiles in the Region: forest fires declared a public disaster in Tolima, a spreading dengue outbreak, and heavy rains – all occurring alongside the response to the August 10 earthquake (6–8). Peru is experiencing one of the most prolonged and severe impact scenarios of 2026: a coastal El Niño episode with rains and flooding since February, with 70 reported deaths and 633 health facilities affected (9–11, 12–15).
- In the Brazil and Southern Cone Subregion, Brazil accounts for the region’s most significant impact, with reduced water levels in the Amazon basin and air quality affected by wildfires, leading to public health emergencies declared at the municipal and state levels.
- PAHO/WHO is providing support for preparedness and response efforts in various countries of the Region, primarily in the Central American Dry Corridor, the Andean Region, Brazil, and the Caribbean, with an emphasis on the resilience of health services in the Dry Corridor of Honduras (16).

Impacts associated with the El Niño phenomenon: Wildfires in Colombia (left) and floods in Peru (right)



Source: “El Tiempo” newspaper

KEY INDICATORS

>90% probability of a “very strong” El Niño (Oct–Dec 2026), according to NOAA

≥5.2 M

People affected, exposed, or experiencing acute food insecurity¹

70

Reported deaths in Peru due to rains/mudslides (Dec. 2025–Aug. 2026)

8 Countries/Territories with official emergency or alert declarations (national and/or subnational)

8 Countries/territories with active drought or water shortages

6 Countries with wildfires posing a health risk or impact

5 countries with documented impacts from flooding or heavy rains

3 Countries showing signs of an increase in arboviruses

Sources

¹ Minimum estimate of people affected, exposed, or experiencing acute food insecurity, based on official records monitored by country; this should not be interpreted as a single population category.

Regional or multinational indicators, verified using official sources.

Notes

- Information is subject to change. The data presented were obtained from official national sources as well as from PAHO/WHO country focal points.
- Figures on the number of people affected, damage to health facilities, and other estimates should be considered preliminary.

BACKGROUND

The effects of El Niño have extended beyond the climate sphere, generating significant consequences for public health in the Region of the Americas, primarily due to water- and foodborne diseases, vector-borne diseases, and disruptions to health services (17). This background information should be taken into account when monitoring the 2026–2027 El Niño episode; a regional summary is presented below (17,18–22).

1997–1998	2015–2016	2023–2024	2026–2027
Resurgence of cholera in Peru, Bolivia, Honduras, and Ecuador; 386 deaths attributed to the El Niño phenomenon and damage to health facilities (23–26).	Spread of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue; 177,614 cases of Zika in 48 countries and a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (27–30).	Record dengue transmission: 4.6 million cases in 2023 and more than 5.2 million additional cases through April 2024 (18–22).	Ongoing events: monitoring of drought, rainfall/flooding, wildfires, and arboviral diseases in the Region (current report).

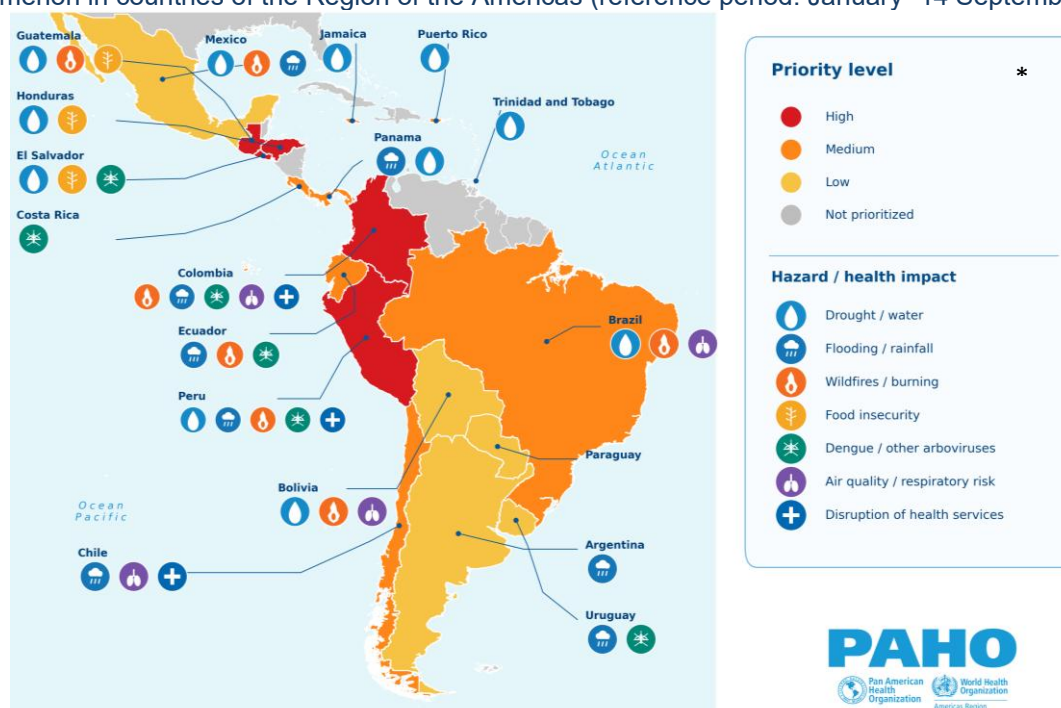
Source: Prepared internally based on data from PAHO/WHO, Ministries of Health, and National Focal Points.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The following is a summary of the monitoring of the evolution of relevant hydrometeorological and environmental threats in the context of the El Niño phenomenon, as well as the possible implications for public health and the progress of preparedness efforts in the subregions and countries of the Region of the Americas, according to the level of impact.

This report includes the countries and territories for which information was available during the monitoring period; the monitoring process will continue to update this information in future editions.

Figure 1. Hydrometeorological and environmental hazards and priority health impacts associated with the El Niño phenomenon in countries of the Region of the Americas (reference period: January–14 September 2026)



Source: Prepared by the authors based on official references

***Note: Classification methodology:** High = active alert/emergency declaration and/or documented high-severity public health impact. Medium = identified threat + some identified public health impact, without a formal emergency declaration. Low = identified threat, without documented public health impact or declaration. Not prioritized = no threat or impact identified during the monitoring period (see Annex 1). This scale ranks the situation documented during the monitoring period—based on available information and reported institutional responses—and does not constitute a prospective risk assessment. A recurring seasonal threat is considered associated with the 2026–2027 episode when its magnitude, extent, or persistence exceeds historical patterns for the area, or when official meteorological sources indicate this.

CENTRAL AMERICA SUBREGION

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Central American Dry Corridor (Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador) shows one of the region’s most significant health impacts: acute food insecurity associated with drought (1,3–5).
- Panama faces a pattern of successive hydrological extremes: flooding in the north since January and a projected risk of water shortages from October 2026 through March 2027 (31).
- Costa Rica reports a 67% increase in dengue cases compared to 2025, with no prioritized hydrometeorological threat during that period (32,33).

Honduras

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
An active drought in the Dry Corridor, with emergency declarations and red alerts, and reduced availability of drinking water in rural municipalities (3,4).	Acute food insecurity affecting 1.8–2.2 million people; health risks in school infrastructure due to water shortages, with a risk of gastrointestinal diseases (3,4,34).
OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
• Early warning and distribution of food aid in the Dry Corridor, coordinated by COPECO (4). • Alerts from the Health Surveillance Unit regarding rising temperatures and dust from the Sahara; participation in the PAHO Regional Accelerator (35). • Executive Decree PCM-016, August 19, 2026: declaration of a state of emergency due to meteorological drought in 75 municipalities in the departments of Choluteca, Comayagua, El Paraíso, Francisco Morazán, La Paz, and Valle; implementation of the Comprehensive Drought Management Plan and coordination of the Inter-institutional Technical Committee (35).	• Anticipatory action funded through the CERF and the STAR-H tool in 5 municipalities in Francisco Morazán and El Paraíso, to protect public health before water shortages lead to public health emergencies (16). • Mapping of capacities and gaps in the operational continuity of health facilities; support to SESAL in risk analysis and epidemiological surveillance (35).

Guatemala

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Drought in the Dry Corridor, consistent with the expected El Niño climate pattern (1,3-5).	Acute food insecurity: nearly 3 million people at critical levels and 250,000 in acute emergency; Alta Verapaz is the most critically affected department, with more than 28% of its population in the Crisis phase (5,36); Additionally, the PAHO/WHO country office reported 1,207 emergencies, 93,722 people affected, 1,843 forest fires extinguished, 7,126 hectares affected, and 6 shelters set up (279 people housed) (35).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
Joint report on critical hotspots of acute food insecurity, prepared by SESAN, FAO, and the WFP (5).	- Protection of health facilities: rapid repairs to water systems and provision of clinical equipment kits (35). - Training for health workers in outbreak surveillance and response; provision of vector control kits (35). - Actions funded by the humanitarian fund in four departments: Alta Verapaz, Chiquimula, Quiché, and Huehuetenango (35).

| El Salvador

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
National declaration of a red alert due to meteorological and agricultural drought; the sectoral readiness report identifies 104 districts, 21 municipalities, and 11 departments with high and very high susceptibility to water shortages, agricultural stress, and disruption of livelihoods (31,35).	Rural nutritional risk, with 6.9 million quintals of corn, beans, and sorghum at risk; signs of a 19% increase in dengue cases (31,32,33).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
Declaration of a red alert due to meteorological and agricultural drought by the General Directorate of Civil Protection (31).	- Rehabilitation of pumping systems and water storage points at 60 health facilities (35). - Rehabilitation of pumping systems and water storage points at 60 health facilities: work has already been completed and handed over at 21 facilities, while 39 are in the process of being completed, with progress on track to finish the project soon (35). - Donation and commissioning of PURIAGUA (a sodium hypochlorite-based disinfectant solution distributed by the Ministry of Health of El Salvador) equipment at 36 health facilities: 12 facilities have already received the equipment, and health personnel have been trained in its use and operation. The remaining 24 facilities are scheduled to receive the equipment next month. - Donation of molecular tests and diagnostic equipment (arboviruses, influenza, rotavirus, <i>Bordetella spp.</i>) to the national reference laboratory (35). - National vector control campaign in areas with the highest incidence of dengue; provision of fumigation equipment and personal protective equipment (35).

| Panama

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Flooding in the northern part of the country since January 2026, with a projected risk of water shortages between October 2026 and March 2027 (31).	More than 15,000 people affected by the floods since January; no confirmed public health impact as of the cutoff date (31).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
Declaration of a national state of emergency due to flooding and the risk of water shortages, Government of Panama (31).	No specific PAHO/WHO country-level actions reported for the period covered by this report.

Costa Rica

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
No prioritized hydrometeorological threat during the reported period; the country maintains active surveillance for El Niño events (32,33,37).	A 67% increase in dengue cases compared to 2025, in line with the regional trend in arboviral diseases (32,33).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
A National Contingency Strategy for El Niño 2026–2027 is in place; specific figures regarding associated actions and investments could not be verified with an official source within this report.	No specific PAHO/WHO country-level actions were reported for the period covered by this report.

ANDEAN SUBREGION

HIGHLIGHTS
- Colombia presents a complex risk profile, with wildfires, heavy rains, and an active dengue outbreak, compounded by the response to the August 10 earthquake (6–8,38). - Peru has experienced the longest-lasting and most severe situation of 2026: Coastal El Niño with rains and flooding since February, followed by an expansion of the emergency declaration to 893 districts in 22 departments and the Constitutional Province of Callao, Level 4, via Supreme Decree No. 124-2026-PCM (9-11, 12-15, 39). - Bolivia continues to experience severe/extreme drought in the Altiplano, with a seasonal risk of wildfires pending official verification (40). - For Ecuador, a link between the Guayaquil rainfall episode and El Niño was explicitly ruled out, although the country maintains its orange alert and National Action Plan (41).

Colombia

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
- Forest fires declared a public disaster in Tolima (more than 50,000 ha and 23 municipalities affected) and heavy rains in the Pacific region (6,7,38). - Antioquia, 23 wildfires; Cali, more than 30 forest fires in July (20% more than in the same month of 2025)	- Active dengue outbreak, with malaria transmission and yellow fever circulation; respiratory risk from smoke; non-structural damage to San Jorge Hospital, Pereira (6,8,38). - Impact reported by department (PAHO/WHO country office): Arauca, 57% of territory initially affected and more than 9,000 families affected, with 4 bridges collapsed; Córdoba, more than 37,000 people and

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
	12,000 families affected; Chocó, 8,341 people and 3,393 families affected, with 14 homes destroyed, 1 road, and 1 vehicular bridge affected (35).

Concurrent event: These impacts are being addressed simultaneously with the health response to the magnitude 7.4 earthquake on August 10, which is unrelated to El Niño (42).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Decree 802, July 23, 2026: declaration of a national disaster; Decree 150, July 22, 2026: declaration of a state of economic, social, and ecological emergency in the departments of Córdoba, Antioquia, La Guajira, Sucre, Bolívar, Cesar, Magdalena, and Chocó (35); Departmental public calamity declaration due to wildfires in Tolima, issued by the Tolima Governor's Office and the Presidency, August 13 and 27 (6,7). - Agricultural recovery plan: subsidies, inputs, and loan relief for affected producers (7).	- Deployment of Rapid Response Teams in Córdoba and Arauca, with technical and financial support from the Regional Office (35). - Procurement and delivery of 15,500 long-lasting mosquito nets in areas at risk of vector-borne diseases (35). - Technical cooperation for the health response to the August 10 earthquake (42,35).

Peru

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Coastal El Niño with rains and flooding since February 2026; in July, Supreme Decree No. 097-2026-PCM expanded the declaration to 796 districts in 22 departments and the Constitutional Province of Callao; in August, a Level 4 water shortage emergency was also declared in 607 districts across 16 departments; and on September 1, through Supreme Decree No. 124-2026-PCM, the declaration of imminent danger due to heavy rainfall was expanded to 893 districts. The Ministry of Health (MINSa) maintains a national Yellow Alert in health facilities due to heavy rains, and 32 forest fires have been recorded in the Amazon region (9, 10, 11, 43, 12, 13, 14, 15, 39).	At least 68 deaths due to rainfall (December 2025–March 2026) and 2 additional deaths from a mudslide in August; 633 of 8,714 health facilities affected; a preventive alert for leptospirosis and dengue in Southern Lima, with no confirmed cases (10, 13, 14, 44). According to the PAHO/WHO Country Office, 4,393 exposed health facilities were identified in areas declared to be in a state of emergency (4,294 primary-care facilities); as of September 4, 3 people were reported injured, with no deaths or missing persons, and 97 MINSa IPRESS facilities and 3 Ministry of Health facilities were affected – all of which remained operational – in addition to 4 administrative offices that sustained damage (39).

Terminology note: “Coastal El Niño” (or El Niño Costero in Spanish) is a regional event along the Peruvian coast, distinct from the El Niño episode on the equatorial Pacific scale that is the focus of this report, although the two are related (9,10,11,43,12,13,14,15).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Emergency declaration issued in 246 districts across 14 regions due to heavy rains, marking the initial phase of the coastal El Niño, on February 24 (15). - Expansion of the declaration to 893 districts in 22 departments and the Constitutional Province of Callao, Level 4, via Supreme Decree No. 097-2026-PCM, July 2026 (12,39).	- Workshops on water monitoring and surveillance in northern regions, and preparation of a Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) training of trainers workshop for the northern macroregion (35). - Technical support to MINSa/DIGERD and the Health Emergency Operations Center, with an emphasis on information management and Health DANA in the northern region; the continuity and resilience of

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Emergency declaration due to water shortages in 607 districts across 16 departments, August 13 (9). - The Ministry of Health (MINSA) activated national monitoring through the Health Emergency Operations Center (COE Salud) and the Emergency and Disaster Response Teams (EMED) of DIRESA, GERESA, and DIRIS, recording damages and needs through SIREED and EDAN Salud; as of September 4, 74 regional professionals, 44 technical team members, 17 regional first responders, and 1 SAMU ambulance had been mobilized, with 2 mobile infrastructure units deployed in Lima (39).	health, WASH, and safe water services; epidemiological and laboratory surveillance; and risk communication (39).

Bolivia (Plurinational State of)

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Severe/extreme drought in 17 municipalities of the Altiplano, with a historically high seasonal risk of wildfires, though no active fires have been verified in the last 30 days (40).	Historical respiratory risk is associated with smoke, with no current confirmed figures for the period covered by this report (40).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Active drought monitoring in 17 municipalities of the Altiplano, SENAMHI Bolivia (40). - Activation of the National Emergency Operations Center (COEN) and its sectoral working groups (35).	Support for the Disaster Risk and Emergency Management Unit to strengthen departmental Emergency Operations Centers (COE) (35).

Ecuador

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Orange alert (Resolution SNGR-193-2026, July 20) for El Niño 2026–2027; the rainfall episode of August 17–18 in Guayaquil was explicitly ruled out by INAMHI as being associated with El Niño (41).	The PAHO/WHO Country Office reported, within the context of the 2026 rainy season, 35 deaths, 142,602 people affected, 21,142 people severely affected, 38,341 homes affected (317 destroyed), 67 bridges affected (36 destroyed), 76.02 km of roads affected, and 2,050 forest fires (3 active); INAMHI has not established a direct link between these events and the El Niño phenomenon (35,41). Official sources have not identified any confirmed public health impact attributable to El Niño during this period; this does not mean there is no risk, and the country continues to actively monitor dengue and other arboviral diseases (41).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
Orange alert, National El Niño Action Plan, and ENSO alert issuance protocol (35).	- Meetings with provincial authorities to review emergency plans and implement the preparedness checklist; coordination of a regional drill for Rapid Response Teams (35). - Development of the ENSO contingency plan and participation in the Territorial Action Plan for dengue with the Ecuadorian Red Cross (35).

BRAZIL AND SOUTHERN CONE SUBREGION

HIGHLIGHTS

- Brazil accounts for the most significant regional indicator: reduced water levels in the Amazon basin and air quality impacts from wildfires, with public health emergencies declared at the municipal and state levels (45–49, 50, 51).
- Chile experienced significant impacts in the Southern Cone: a period of heavy rains in the south-central part of the country (July) and flash floods in the north (August), with a Red Alert issued by the National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response (SENAPRED), resulting in displaced people and evacuations (52–54).
- Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay are in an active monitoring and readiness phase, with official flood warnings issued for the La Plata Basin and interagency coordination in the health sector; no confirmed health impacts have been reported during the period covered by this report (55–61).

Brazil

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Declining water levels in the Amazon Basin and air quality degradation due to wildfires, with 630 municipalities exceeding the WHO-recommended level for fine particulate matter; hydrometeorological events (storms, hail, floods) recorded by the state-run Vigidesastres in June–August, with no direct official attribution to the phenomenon (45–47, 48, 49).	As of the cutoff date, no technical health agency had established a correlation between these events and specific health outcomes; public health emergencies were declared in municipalities in Amazonas, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco, and São Paulo due to drought, hail, and floods (49).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Launch of the 2026–2027 Plan for Preparedness and Response to Public Health Emergencies Associated with El Niño, Ministry of Health, August 26 (46). - Second national mobilization meeting of state officials (26 states and the Federal District) to develop state plans in response to El Niño, September 1 (46). - Roraima declared a drought emergency and established an integrated task force; São Paulo launched its State Health Preparedness and Response Plan (50,51). - Municipal public health emergency declarations: Novo Aripuanã/AM (Decree 119/2026, risk of	- Technical support from the Vigidesastres Program to regional risk assessment offices in the 26 states, including the development of preparedness plans for the health sector (49). - Support to the offices of the National Plan to Combat Drought in the Amazon and Pantanal in 9 states, and for state preparedness offices in Mato Grosso and Rio de Janeiro (49).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
opportunistic diseases due to drought, receding rivers, and wildfires); Boa Esperança/MG (Decree 6,240/2026, Level II, due to heavy rains and hail); Goiana/PE (due to heavy rains and flooding); Guariba/SP (Decree 5,019/2026, following an extreme natural disaster on July 24); Humaitá/AM (due to severe drought and disruption to the continuity of health services) (49).	

Chile

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
Heavy rainfall in the south-central part of the country in July 2026 (Biobío, La Araucanía, and Maule regions), resulting in river flooding, storm surges, and power outages; in August, unusual rainfall in the north (arid zone) caused flash floods and landslides (52,53). Note: The meteorological events recorded in the sources consulted are not directly attributed to the El Niño phenomenon.	The National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response (Senapred) reported 9 people affected in La Araucanía, 161 people sheltered, and 45 people isolated in the Maule Region, in addition to more than 160,000 customers without power; in the north, preventive evacuations were ordered due to the risk of flash floods. The Ministry of Health (MINSAL) also warns of increased pressure on emergency services due to respiratory illnesses associated with the rise in rainfall and humidity, against a backdrop of budget constraints in the health sector (52,53,54).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- Declaration of a Red Alert and Preventive Emergency by Senapred in municipalities in the Biobío, La Araucanía, and Maule regions, with evacuations ordered in the north of the country due to the risk of flash floods (52, 53). - The Minister of Health coordinated the regional health response in the Biobío Region during the emergency (52).	No specific actions by PAHO/WHO in the country were reported for the period covered by this report.

Argentina

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
The National Meteorological Service (SMN) confirms an active El Niño, with a near-100% probability that it will persist through the summer of 2026–2027; above-normal rainfall is forecast for the Litoral and the Río de la Plata Basin, with a risk of flooding along the Paraná and Uruguay rivers (55,56).	A technical analysis by the Ministry of National Security warned of the risk of the most severe flooding in 30 years, with up to 3 million hectares potentially affected in the provinces of Formosa, Chaco, Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Corrientes, and Entre Ríos; no official figures on the number of people affected or confirmed health impacts have been reported as of the date of this report (56,57).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	ACTIONS BY PAHO/WHO
- The National Ministry of Health announced a coordinated assistance plan to strengthen care in localities where hospital capacity might be overwhelmed in the event of flooding (57). - Establishment of the El Niño Preparedness Task Force, with participation from authorities in Buenos Aires, Chaco, Corrientes, Entre Ríos, Misiones, and Santa Fe, to review historical data and assess the potential impact on the La Plata Basin (58). - Argentina strengthened its preparedness for El Niño through an inter-institutional Early Warning Task Force to anticipate and mitigate hydrometeorological risks in the Litoral region (62).	- No specific PAHO/WHO country-level actions were reported for the period covered by this report. - Support for national authorities in monitoring and analyzing risks and needs.

Uruguay

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
The Uruguayan Institute of Meteorology (Inumet) warned that the 2026–2027 El Niño will be a “very strong” phenomenon, with a higher probability of above-normal rainfall in the spring and summer; no confirmed impact event has yet been recorded during the reporting period (59,60).	The main health risks following potential flooding are identified as the proliferation of the dengue-transmitting mosquito in stagnant water and the risk of leptospirosis from contact with contaminated water; no confirmed cases or outbreaks have been reported during the period (60).

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
- The Ministry of Public Health (MSP) held coordination meetings with the Ministry of the Environment, the National Emergency System (Sinae), Inumet, and PAHO/WHO to prepare the response to El Niño (59). - Sinae is working with mobile phone operators to simultaneously send early warning alerts via SMS to the population (60).	PAHO/WHO participation in inter-agency coordination meetings convened by the MSP and Sinae (59).

Paraguay

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
The country is in the preparation phase for the potential impacts of El Niño, with no major hydrometeorological event confirmed during the reporting period (61).	No confirmed impact on public health during the reporting period.

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
The Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (MSPyBS), through the Directorate of Health Care in Emergencies and Disasters (ASANED) and the General Directorate of Health Surveillance (DGVS),	No specific PAHO/WHO country-level actions were reported for the period covered by this report.

OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
is promoting the implementation of the National Multi-Hazard Response Plan, strengthening epidemiological surveillance, hospital safety assessments, training of health personnel in risk management, and the conduct of interagency flood response drills. These actions were carried out in coordination with the National Emergency Secretariat (SEN) and with technical support from PAHO/WHO, with the aim of ensuring the continuity of health services and improving the capacity to respond to extreme weather events (63–65).	

CARIBBEAN SUBREGION

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Caribbean (Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago) is experiencing signs of regional drought, water rationing, and water outages, with no confirmed outbreaks as of the report's cutoff date (66–69).
- CARPHA concluded a training cycle on field epidemiology and outbreak response (One Health) in Trinidad and Tobago, and PAHO/WHO completed climate and health profiles for 7 Caribbean countries (70, 71).

| Caribbean: Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago

COUNTRY/ TERRITORY	MAIN HAZARD	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH	READINESS AND RESPONSE
Jamaica	Regional drought; precipitation 70% below normal (August–October) (66).	Water and public health risks due to water scarcity; no confirmed outbreak (66,67).	Water rationing through rotating shutoffs (NWC) (67). Climate and health profile prepared by PAHO/WHO (70).
Puerto Rico	Forecast of below-normal precipitation (68).	Water rationing measures; no confirmed outbreak (68).	Water rationing, Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, and NOAA (68).
Trinidad and Tobago	Official drought forecast for the northeast of the country (69).	Water and public health risks due to water scarcity; no confirmed outbreak (69).	Official drought forecast, Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service (69). Training in field epidemiology and outbreak response, CARPHA (71).

NORTH AMERICA SUBREGION

HIGHLIGHTS

- Mexico is experiencing a precipitation deficit and an increased risk of wildfires, with no confirmed or attributable public health impact during the period (72,73).
- In the official sources consulted during the monitoring period, no hydrometeorological hazards or public-health events associated with El Niño were identified in Canada or the United States of America.

Mexico

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
The National Meteorological Service (SMN) confirms that El Niño is established and intensifying, with a greater than 90% probability of reaching very strong intensity during the winter of 2026–2027 (September 11, 2026); between January and August 2026, a cumulative precipitation deficit of 45.1 mm was recorded (9.6% below the 1991–2020 climatological average), with the deficit being most pronounced in July–August; increased cold front activity and a higher probability of wildfires are forecast for the first quarter of 2027, as well as increased cyclonic activity in the Pacific with a possible impact on the coasts of Oaxaca, Michoacán, Guerrero, and Jalisco (73).	The country does not have a health impact estimate attributable exclusively to El Niño; historical evidence regarding its association with dengue is mixed—an analysis across 12 states (1985–2007) documented a higher average incidence during El Niño episodes, while another analysis found no consistent ENSO-dengue relationship at the national level. No confirmed public health impact attributable to the 2026–2027 episode was observed during the reporting period (73).
OFFICIAL READINESS AND RESPONSE	PAHO/WHO ACTIONS
• Continuous monitoring of El Niño conditions and their potential effects by the National Meteorological Service (SMN) and the National Water Commission (CONAGUA), including seasonal forecasts of precipitation, cold fronts, and wildfire risk (73).	• No specific PAHO/WHO country actions were reported for the period covered by this report.

Canada and the United States of America

HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS	IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH
In the official sources consulted during the monitoring period, no hydrometeorological or environmental hazards associated with El Niño were identified in these countries (72).	No additional evidence was identified in official sources in English and French for Canada and the United States (mainland) during the period (72).

Low-impact situation with no specific preparedness or response needs or actions reported for the period covered by this report (72).

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEALTH PREPAREDNESS, READINESS AND RESPONSE

Based on the identified threats and gaps, it is recommended to prioritize the following lines of public health preparedness and response, in accordance with the priority areas established by PAHO/WHO for El Niño:

1. Coordination and Leadership

- Strengthen Health Emergency Operations Centers (COE) or emergency monitoring and management rooms.
- Strengthen the capacities of risk assessment, damage assessment, and needs analysis teams – Health DANA and emergency response teams.
- Monitor the approval and implementation of national El Niño preparedness and response plans and promote proactive measures by the health sector.
- Monitor the adequacy of budgetary resources allocated to national health preparedness and response plans and promote complementary funding sources where appropriate.
- Strengthen national and regional coordination and intersectoral collaboration to ensure a proactive and sustained response.
- Update and activate contingency plans for droughts, heat waves, wildfires, floods, and other events associated with El Niño.
- Strengthen institutional capacities for communication during emergencies.
- Mobilize resources and align partner interventions through health sector coordination mechanisms and working groups.

2. Collaborative Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services

- Strengthen collaborative and multisectoral surveillance of threats associated with El Niño and its health impacts by integrating epidemiological, hydrometeorological, environmental, and health services data.
- Strengthen early detection and event- and risk-based surveillance, with special attention to dengue and other vector-borne diseases, diarrheal diseases, malnutrition, heat-related effects, and respiratory conditions associated with wildfires and air pollution.
- Strengthen early warning mechanisms and action thresholds for droughts, water shortages, floods, wildfires, heat waves, and other events associated with El Niño.
- Improve the timely exchange of information among epidemiological surveillance, public health laboratories, meteorological and hydrological authorities, risk management, water and sanitation, and food security agencies.
- Strengthen the capacities of public health laboratories for diagnosis, outbreak confirmation, and water quality monitoring, as well as for monitoring food security, nutritional status, and associated morbidity in high-risk populations and areas.

3. Clinical Management and Health Services

- Update and test plans to ensure the continuity of essential health services, including staffing, water, power, and alternative service delivery modalities.
- Assess health facilities that are exposed or at risk and strengthen their operational readiness to respond to droughts, floods, wildfires, and heat waves.
- Strengthen the capacity of health personnel and hospital committees to respond to emergencies associated with El Niño.
- Establish alternative service delivery methods when health facilities or access routes are affected.
- Strengthen the preparedness of health services for heat waves, wildfires, and episodes of air pollution.
- Integrate mental health and psychosocial support into preparedness and response plans, particularly for populations affected by protracted emergencies.
- Ensure the continuity of prevention, protection, and care services in response to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Incorporate measures to ensure access to and continuity of care for the most vulnerable groups.

4. Water, Sanitation, Vaccination, and Community

- Step up monitoring of water and air quality, as well as health risks associated with droughts, fires, and pollution.
- Ensure the continuity and availability of safe water and sanitation services in communities and health facilities.
- Strengthen food and nutrition safety nets and early response mechanisms in the event of deteriorating food security.
- Ensure the continuity of vaccination, with special attention to diseases with epidemic risk, such as measles.
- Strengthen community participation in preparedness, anticipatory action, and sustained response to El Niño.
- Implement risk communication campaigns on the main health impacts of El Niño and preventive measures.
- Prioritize protection and communication measures targeting older adults, children, people with chronic diseases, exposed workers, and other vulnerable groups.

5. Logistics and Countermeasures

- Ensure the availability of medicines, supplies, equipment, power, and other critical resources needed to maintain the continuity of essential services.
- Establish and strengthen mechanisms for stockpiling medicines and health supplies for emergencies.
- Ensure the availability and timely distribution of essential medicines, supplies, and diagnostic tests, prioritizing areas at highest risk of service disruption.
- Identify and maintain alternative logistics routes for areas and facilities that may become isolated due to floods, landslides, fires, or other events.
- Ensure the continuity of the cold chain for vaccines and other temperature-sensitive health products.

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APPENDICES

Table. Classification of countries and territories by priority level, active declarations, and documented health impact

Country/Territory	Subregion	Final Priority	Predominant Situation	Active declaration	Documented Health Impact	Justification / Recommendation
Honduras	Central America	High	Drought / food insecurity	Yes	Yes	Emergency due to meteorological drought in 75 municipalities; acute food insecurity and health risks due to water shortages.
Guatemala	Central America	High	Drought / food insecurity	Not clearly documented	Yes	High priority due to severity: nearly 3 million people at critical levels and 250,000 in acute emergency.
El Salvador	Central America	High	Drought / food insecurity / arboviruses	Yes	Yes	Red alert for drought; rural nutritional risk and signs of an increase in dengue.
Colombia	Andean subregion	High	Fires / Rain / Arboviruses	Yes	Yes	Composite risk: wildfires, heavy rains, active dengue, malaria, yellow fever, and respiratory risk from smoke.
Peru	Andean subregion	High	Rain / flooding / water shortage	Yes	Yes	More prolonged and severe situation: mortality, disruption of health facilities, rainfall, flooding, and water shortages.
Panama*	Central America	Moderate	Rain / flooding / water shortage	Yes	Not confirmed	More than 15,000 people affected and a state of emergency in effect, but no confirmed health impact.
Costa Rica	Central America	Moderate	Arbovirus / mobilization	Unspecified	Yes	67% increase in dengue, although no hydrometeorological threat was prioritized during the period.
Ecuador*	Andean subregion	Moderate	Rainfall / Preparedness	Yes — Orange alert	Unconfirmed / Not Attributable	Active alert and significant events, but no confirmed health impact attributable to El Niño.
Brazil*	Brazil and the Southern Cone	Moderate	Drought / Air Quality / Wildfires	Subnational	Partial / subnational	Decline in Amazonian water resources and pollution from wildfires; primarily subnational declarations with no established national correlation.
Chile	Brazil and the Southern Cone	Moderate	Rainfall / Floods / Flash Floods	Yes	Yes	Storms, flash floods, displaced people, and pressure on emergency services due to respiratory illnesses.
Jamaica	Caribbean	Moderate	Drought / water shortage	Not reported	Not confirmed	Regional drought and water rationing with water and health risks.

Puerto Rico	Caribbean	Moderate	Drought / water shortage	Not reported	Not confirmed	Precipitation deficit and water rationing measures.
Trinidad and Tobago	Caribbean	Moderate	Drought / water shortage	Not reported	Not confirmed	Official forecast of drought and water and sanitation risks due to water scarcity.
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)*	Andean subregion	Low	Drought / Fire Risk	No	Not confirmed	Severe/extreme drought in 17 municipalities of the Altiplano; the alert remains at “Low” because, as of the cutoff date, no forest fires or associated public health impacts have been reported. Monitoring will continue given the severity of the documented threat (*).
Argentina	Brazil and the Southern Cone	Low	Prospective flood risk	No	No	Risk of rain and flooding, with no confirmed health impact as of this report.
Uruguay	Brazil and the Southern Cone	Low	Prospective flood risk	No	No	Potential risk of heavy rains, dengue, and leptospirosis; no confirmed high-impact events.
Paraguay	Brazil and the Southern Cone	Low	Preparedness / prospective risk	No	No	Preparedness phase, with no major hydrometeorological events or confirmed health impacts.
Mexico	North America	Low	Water shortage / fire risk	No	No	Precipitation deficit (9.6% below the 1991–2020 average) and a historic increase in the area burned by wildfires during El Niño years; the country lacks a health impact estimate attributable exclusively to El Niño, and no confirmed health impact has been reported during the period (73).
Canada	North America	Not prioritized	No identified threat	No	No	No El Niño-associated hydrometeorological or environmental threats were identified during the period.
United States of America	North America	Not prioritized	No identified threat	No	No	No El Niño-associated hydrometeorological or environmental threats were identified during the period.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the official references included in this report (reference period: January–September 14, 2026).

Cases marked with (*) are borderline cases that do not fit perfectly into the two-criteria matrix (declaration x impact): Panama has an active declaration but the health impact is not confirmed (remains at Medium); Ecuador has a declaration and a reported humanitarian impact, but INAMHI does not confirm a direct attribution to El Niño (remains at “Medium” with a clarifying note); Brazil has neither a declaration nor an established national correlation, but it does have public health emergency declarations at the municipal/state level with a partially documented impact (remains at “Medium” with a note regarding a subnational phenomenon); Bolivia is experiencing severe to extreme drought in 17 municipalities of the Altiplano, but remains at “Low” as there is no formal declaration and no confirmed fires or public health effects as of the cutoff date; monitoring will continue given the severity of the documented threat.