



# Hope for Children in Guatemala

Guatemala's vice president, Dr. Rafael Espada, has called it a tragedy.

Half of the country's children younger than 5 – more than 1 million boys and girls – suffer from chronic malnutrition. It is the highest malnourishment rate in Latin America. And it is the sixth-highest rate in the world.

Still reeling from a 36-year civil war that ended in 1996, much of Guatemala remains mired in poverty, social inequality and disease. With 12 million people, the country is the most populous nation in Central America. But millions of those people lack regular access to health services, the quality of which is severely limited. People remain plagued by AIDS, HIV, dengue fever, tuberculosis and other diseases.

Even if healthcare is available, many people, especially in rural and indigenous areas, cannot afford it. According to the World Bank, more than 9 million people live below the poverty line.

“Many people in Guatemala, especially children, consistently suffer from a lack of adequate healthcare,” said Michael J. Nyenhuis, president of Medical Assistance Programs (MAP) International. “Many suffer from diseases that are preventable and treatable. It is imperative that MAP work with partner agencies to provide essential medicines and health services.”

Through such a partnership with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vitamins, headquartered in Tempe, Arizona, MAP International is providing more than 114,000 vitamins each month for people in some of Guatemala's poorest areas. These supplements, which are primarily distributed to children through clinics in rural areas, are part of MAP's overall health initiative to provide essential healthcare in Guatemala.

Since 1999, MAP has shipped more than \$130 million – more than 332 tons – in antibiotics, bandages, oral rehydration salts and other medicines and medical supplies to partner agencies working in Guatemala. These partners include voluntary teams of short-term physicians as well as other nongovernmental organizations which help supply local clinics and hospitals with medical supplies. MAP supports more than 100 clinics and hospitals throughout the country.

“MAP is committed to providing the people of Guatemala with the life-saving medicines they need,” Mr. Nyenhuis said. “By working with partner agencies to save lives, we're providing the people with health and hope they might not otherwise have.”



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*Health and Hope for a Hurting World  
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