# CASE STUDY A

There has been a large earthquake with significant damage to the major city and the surrounding areas. Initial reports of around 50,000 fatalities are expected to rise as areas become accessible and as a result of the injuries people have suffered. The setting is one with well-developed infrastructure in the cities and towns though some of the rural areas thought to be affected are difficult to reach being mountainous with poor road access. Government structures normally function well but the scale of destruction has overwhelmed the local response capacity and there are the beginnings of a sizeable international response. There are reports of large numbers of UASC and many people have fled, in particular away from the built-up areas of the city. Aftershocks are creating panic and people are still on the move.

The earthquake has damaged large areas of the city including business areas where people were at work and are trapped in high rise buildings and schools, with reports of children being trapped in residential areas, both very affluent areas with large, gated properties and a large slum area where migrant workers and their families are known to reside. Many of the migrant workers are likely to be illegal immigrants, some of whom bring their children for employment in the garment factories and as domestic workers.

Initial multi-sector assessments indicate that many children have become separated from their families, as children were at school/families at work when the earthquake struck, and many roads are impassable and areas inaccessible. The national Red Cross society has set up some reception centres and field hospitals are also being established where people are being given first aid. However, these are already overwhelmed.

There are many local orphanages which are said to be taking in children – there are rumours of children having “disappeared” from one of the orphanages.

Media coverage has focused on the situation of “orphaned” children and has also reported incidents of trafficking of children – the city is well known for attracting “sex tourists” and trafficking is known to be a problem in the region. There is a large migrant population with many women and girls working as domestic help.

There has been no preparation for the earthquake; however, UNICEF and a number of NGO’s have good capacity and experience of dealing with natural disasters at regional level. It is expected that more organisations will be arriving with the intention of working with UASC.

UNICEF has been requested to help the government to coordinate work with UASC.

It has not been possible to carry out a child protection assessment yet and there is a demand from other sectors to provide assistance to children who are apparently alone.

A cluster coordination structure is being put in place and a Disasters Emergency Committee funding appeal has been launched.