

FOREWORD

In 2007, natural and man-made disasters continued to take a toll on the lives of people. Flooding, cyclones, landslides and tropical storms have threatened lives and livelihoods on every continent. And in many parts of the world, from Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Iraq, Zimbabwe and Sudan, children and women continue to bear the brunt of conflict, displacement and deteriorating living conditions.



An important lesson learned from major emergencies is that timely and flexible funding enables humanitarian actors to respond rapidly and most effectively to priorities established with national counterparts. To ensure timely availability of funds, UNICEF has increased its Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) to US\$ 75 million per biennium.

Throughout the year, UNICEF and its partners have worked to meet the needs and rights of affected children and women. Partnerships are key to making a lasting difference for them and UNICEF has focused on further expanding its partnerships with communities, governments, NGOs, UN agencies and the private sector. Experience has taught us that children and communities must be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to better prepare and cope with disasters.

Coordination is crucial for effective delivery of humanitarian aid. A strong supporter of humanitarian reform, UNICEF continues to work with its partners to improve the coordination of humanitarian response in all sectors. UNICEF is the global cluster lead for nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene and common data services. In education, UNICEF and the Save the Children Alliance are leading the cluster. The successful response to the floods in Mozambique is a good example of how improved coordination allows humanitarian actors to respond better to the needs of affected populations.

UNICEF continues to strengthen its early warning system and country offices' preparedness to respond to disasters. Important measures are being taken to further enhance preparedness and response skills of UNICEF and its partners.

The *2008 Humanitarian Action Report* outlines UNICEF's appeal for 39 emergencies around the world. We count on the continued support and generosity of our donors to help ensure the survival, protection and well-being of women and children in these emergency situations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ann Veneman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, extending to the right with a long horizontal stroke.

Ann M. Veneman
Executive Director