

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

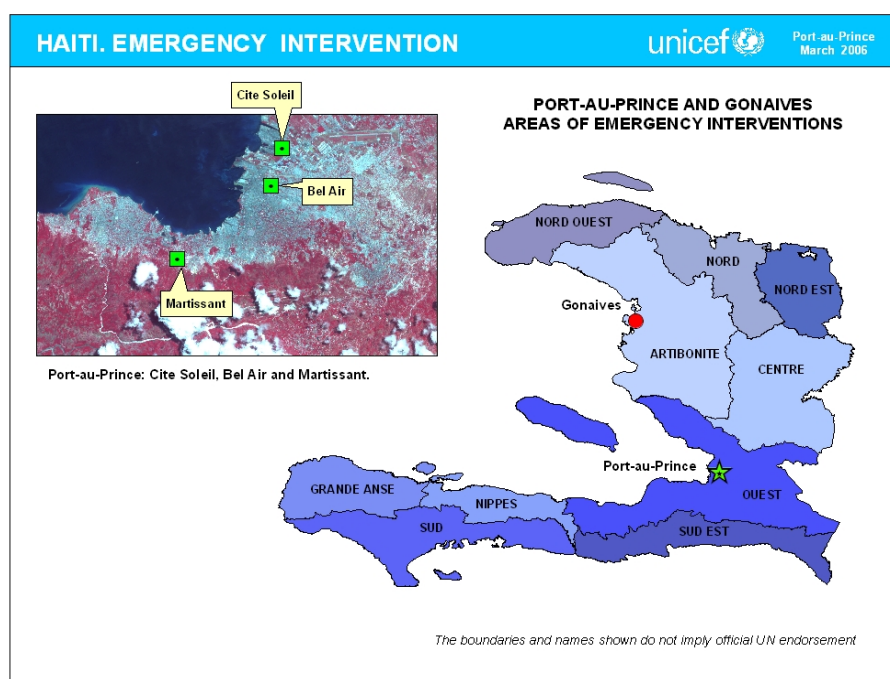
HAITI

DONOR UPDATE

22 MARCH 2006

UNICEF SEEKS US\$ 4,988,156 TO ADDRESS URGENT NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND WOMEN

- Only 16% of the appeal requirements have been met to date, mostly covering education
- UNICEF seeks emergency funding to meet urgent needs in health, nutrition and child protection
- Window of opportunity through calm in Port-au-Prince must be seized



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Haitian children continue to live in dire conditions due to violence linked with political instability, chronic poverty, and a virtually absent child protection system. The daily life of a typical Haitian child is a struggle to survive. With weak state institutions, access to food and basic social services are decreasing. Every year, tropical storms, mudslides and heavy rains add a new plague to the already precarious livelihood of children and their families in most of the regions of Haiti. Unless families are supported to regain or strengthen coping mechanisms, another emergency might be disastrous for children and women.

Recurrent crises in the last few years have resulted in an increasing number of vulnerable children, where today 3 out of 4 of the 3.8m under 18 are vulnerable, deprived of basic services and victims of violence, exploitation and abuse. Child mortality rates in Haiti are the worst in the Americas. One child out of five dies from preventable illnesses before reaching the age of five. Health projects have an uneven geographical spread, with the result being patchy services, understaffed and poorly supplied. UNICEF estimates that across the country, 23% of children under-five suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition, with much higher rates in rural areas. Diarrhoea is the leading cause of death for children under-five – not surprising with only 50% of the population having access to water and 70% of water systems not functioning anywhere near full capacity. In addition, Haiti's HIV prevalence rate remains the highest in the region. It is estimated that, of over 300,000 HIV-positive men, women and children, 45,000 die of AIDS-related illnesses each year. Likewise, 5,000 babies are born with the infection every year and at least 200,000 children have lost one or both parents by AIDS. An estimated 19,000 children are living with HIV/AIDS; 6,000 among them need medical treatment, but only 300 have access to treatment. More than 70,000 school children did not have a chance to complete the school year in 2005.

Against Haiti's backdrop of violence and poverty, the problem of child labour has also grown with more than 300,000 in all, one out of ten, engaged in domestic work. Three-quarters of these are girls. This phenomenon has gone beyond Haiti's border to the Dominican Republic where about 3,000 children are crossing annually, seeking a better life. In Port-au-Prince alone there are 2,500 street children, working and/or sleeping in the streets. About 1,000 children are associated with armed gangs in Port-au-Prince, as messengers, spies, and some even carry guns and participating in the fighting. More than half of girls and women living in those areas have been victims of rape.

Window of opportunity

Haiti is at a turning point, which could provide a significantly more positive environment. After an interim Government and an absence of a parliament since the political crisis of early 2004, there will now be a democratically elected President in Mr. Préval, due to take office in May, and a Parliament. In addition to the stability this may offer, there has been an improvement in the security situation. Particularly noteworthy is the announced truce by gangs controlling Cité Soleil, home to the most vulnerable population and also an area considered extremely dangerous. Further, Haiti is discussed frequently in the UN Security Council, including a planned discussion with the newly elected President in late March. All this provides an excellent opportunity for donor Government and international organizations alike to engage politically and financially to help Haitian children realize their rights.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

In a country marred by an absence of the rule of law, deep general poverty and urgent needs almost throughout the country, there is a large grey zone between what constitutes development and emergency activities. However, the gist of humanitarian activities is about preventing death for each vulnerable child at risk of falling over the edge when an outside force strikes. That outside force can be a natural or man-made one, the latter more often than not affecting the capital of Port-au-Prince.

In a coordinated humanitarian effort, UNICEF continues to assist children and women affected by the various crises. It focuses on providing basic services to the most deprived and vulnerable children and women, especially in urban lawless areas allowing services to resume after more than a year of deprivation. Below is a summary of the achievements over the last few months, some of which represent activities still ongoing.

Health and Nutrition

Obstetric equipment was provided to 28 maternity wards in six out of the ten departments and 190 medical personnel trained in emergency obstetrical and neonatal care. A nation wide de-worming programme targeting 1.2 m children under-12 in and out of school was completed, addressing the primary death cause of children under 5. Four therapeutic centres and 18 supplementary feeding centres in Gonaives and Port-au-Prince were set-up benefiting 8,000 children. UNICEF supported the reopening of four health centres in particularly dangerous and poor neighbourhoods, with staff training, drug supply and equipment for paediatric and obstetric care and management of acute malnutrition of 2,800 children. UNICEF continues to provide therapeutic milk, high protein biscuits, equipment for nutritional surveillance for an average of 400 children per month. A vaccination campaign against measles, polio and tetanus has just been completed in Cité Soleil – the most vulnerable of all neighbourhoods - targeting 35,000 children under-five and 60,000 women of child-bearing age. In addition, all children received Vitamin A and 22,000 pregnant women were supplemented with iron and folic acid. The campaign represents the first time in over 10 years that a vaccination operation of this magnitude has been undertaken in Cité Soleil.

HIV/AIDS

To prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV, UNICEF provides a package comprised of test kits, counselling, anti retrovirals, staff training and mobilization for voluntary testing. 2,000 pregnant women were tested in selected health facilities of which 600 tested positive and benefited, together with their babies, from ARV treatment. In support of the Ministry of Health almost 30,000 tests were taken and 10 laboratory technicians were trained. The PMTCT programme has recently been extended to Cité Soleil as well, targeting 1,000 pregnant women.

Education

In Bel Air – a recently pacified area of the capital - school furniture and equipment were provided to all 80 schools for 17,500 children and 430 teachers (benches, chairs, desks, schools books, black boards, and recreation kits). A quick assessment is underway to launch a similar back-to-school programme in Cité Soleil where 900 students have already received textbooks. In the end, over 20,000 children from 150 schools and 900 teachers are targeted. Humanitarian rehabilitation activities are also ongoing in Grand Anse – a district in the South department particularly hit during the 2005 tropical storms. More than 650 families are targeted, among them 4,000 children, receiving school supplies.

Protection

UNICEF is working with NGOs and CSOs in Port-au-Prince, providing support for street children. 1,200 of them, including at least 500 children with no contact to care centres, received medical attention through a mobile health clinic. A psychologist worked with about 500 children in two care centres, and specifically with girl prostitutes. All children in detention in Port-au-Prince (about 100) were given educational and recreation kits. Community and cultural activities were organised in Port-au-Prince and in Gonaives for 3,000 children affected by violence. And 1,250 extremely vulnerable children from Carrefour-Feuilles (Port-au-Prince) and Gonaives received financial assistance to help them pursue schooling. 2,800 adults and children living with AIDS received hygiene kits in Port-au-Prince. 1,900 children and 2,000 adults affected or infected by HIV/AIDS in rural areas received medical and psychosocial care, as well as educational and financial support.

Constraints

Violence has prevented most humanitarian organisations from delivering basic services, especially in some metropolitan areas. More than 800,000 people living in the most impoverished areas of the capital city such as Cité Soleil, Bel Air, Marissant, and lower Delmas were off limits for UN staff and were not reached consistently for almost two years, due to violence associated with inter-gang or gang vs police/UN troops standoffs. Fear of kidnapping for ransom, rape, and robberies also prevented social workers and medical staff from reaching these areas. Since Presidential elections early February, gang activity particularly in Cité Soleil and Bel Air has considerably slowed and life is returning to a semblance of normality in several neighbourhoods. Social workers are coming back, as are NGO staff.

3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

As part of the Humanitarian Action Report launched in January 2006, UNICEF currently still needs almost exactly \$5 million to be able to respond to the needs of children and women in Haiti. The response from the donor community has been appreciated but very limited, with only 16% or US\$ 972,484 of the almost US\$ 6 million received.

Table 1: Funds Received against Appeal

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector	Funds Received *(US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Health and Nutrition	2,121,330	208,702	1,912,628	90%
Water and Environmental Sanitation	876,600	-	876,600	100%
Education	1,021,400	354,020	667,380	65%
Child Protection	821,340	135,347	685,993	84%
Security	376,630	176,630	200,000	53%
Emergency Preparedness and Response	743,340	97,785	645,555	87%
Total	5,960,640	972,484	4,988,156	84%

Table 2: Funds received by Donor

Donor	Funds Received (US\$)	Sector
Italy***	150,000	Health and Nutrition
US Fund***	58,702	
Italy***	150,000	Education
US Fund***	84,020	
People's Republic of China*	120,000	
US Fund***	135,347	Child protection
HQ funds**	176,630	Security
US Fund***	97,785	Emergency Preparedness and Response
Total	972,484	

* In-kind contribution (school material) by Chinese Government valued at \$120,000

** HQ provided central funds to cover costs of new radios and an armoured vehicle.

*** Funds received late in 2005 but to be used to cover activities identified in the HAR for 2006.

4. IMPACT OF UNDER-FUNDING AND CURRENT PRIORITIES

The vast majority of UNICEF's financial requirements for the conflict affected areas are unmet. At the moment, key projects are on hold and remain unimplemented due to the shortage of funds. Should additional contributions fail to materialize soon, UNICEF will be forced to revise the size and scope of its planned activities.

UNICEF expresses its gratitude to the donors who have thus far contributed to its emergency interventions and hopes that other donors will soon extend their support as well. The timely provision of resources will allow UNICEF to avoid any critical disruption in the provision of essential services and supplies across its five sectors of intervention, as well as to launch new important projects. For Haiti, the peaceful running of elections, and the hopes placed in the new Government and Parliament has led to a significant improvement in humanitarian access for most actors. This window of opportunity must be seized through quick and decisive action. Funds must not be a hindrance in this pursuit.

Table 3: Urgent priority requirements

Table 3: URGENT PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS AS OF MARCH 2006		
Project	Beneficiaries/coverage	Amount Required (US\$)
1. Provision of essential drugs	50,000 people	250,000
2. Provision of nutritional supplements & relevant supplies	30,000 children	100,000
3. Provision of school-in-a-box & recreational kits and rehabilitation of latrines & water systems in 50 schools	15,000 children	275,000
4. Psychosocial support and social activities for children in or at risk of association with armed groups	2,000 children	250,000
Total Priority needs		875,000

Details of the Haiti emergency programme can be obtained from:

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