

UNICEF Humanitarian Action 2010

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

SITUATION UPDATE

The Central African Republic (CAR) continues to suffer from recurrent conflict and instability. The overall political situation remains fragile and challenging, despite some progress made since the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Inclusive Political Dialogue, and the launch of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme in 2009. The elections originally scheduled for 25 April 2010 were delayed to 16 May, and then postponed a second time, adding to further political insecurity. The north-eastern CAR remains particularly unstable, with reported attacks by armed elements, violence against civilians, and the kidnapping of humanitarian workers in recent months. State authority remains absent in the north-east as the armed militias and bandits continue to threaten peace.

Forced displacements are again on the rise. The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) increased from 162,280 to an estimated 195,500.¹ In the Batangafo area a clash between the pastoralists and the local population caused 18 casualties and 3,000 IDPs in March 2010. The situation remains highly unstable, particularly in the Haut Mbomou prefecture, and access to the affected population is extremely limited due to the remote location and poor road conditions owing to weather conditions. In April 2010, the attack by the rebel group CPJP (Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace) in Ndélé city caused a mass movement of the population to the surrounding areas. Furthermore, the security situation worsened mainly due to withdrawal of the FDPC (Democratic Front for the People of the CAR) rebels from the peace process. The Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), the national army, conducted military operations on the axis leading to the settlement of 3,000 IDPs in Kabo city. The influx of refugees into CAR has also increased, mainly due to the volatile situation of the Equateur province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Since November 2009, 18,000 refugees have fled from the Gemena and Dongo areas in the DRC into Moundoumba in the Lobaye prefecture in CAR. In April 2010, some additional 13,000 IDPs and 5,000 refugees have moved to Zémio and surrounding towns including Rafai, Mboki, and Bangassou following the attack of the Ugandan LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) on civilians in rural areas.

KEY RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

In 2010, UNICEF has mainly focused on improving access to health and nutrition facilities, safe drinking water, and appropriate sanitation and hygiene practices, as well as creating child-friendly learning spaces, improving access to education, and a protective environment for children. UNICEF has also worked to ensure that the capacity for emergency preparedness for rapid response is addressed. A nationwide vaccination campaign for polio eradication and vitamin A supplementation is ongoing for 750,000 children aged between six and 59 months. The long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito net (LLIN) distribution campaign was launched, in partnership with the government in a bid to protect children and pregnant women from malaria. At least one mosquito net will be distributed to each of the country's 896,000 households in the coming months. Access to safe water and basic sanitation facilities was improved through the construction of improved family latrines and hygiene promotion at household level for 25,000 people in the Sam Ouandja and Zémio areas in June 2010. Overall, access to safe drinking water was restored for approximately 33,000 people. The UNICEF education programme continues to support the schooling of crisis-affected children and more than 145,000 have resumed school in the Ouham Pendé, Ouham, Nana Gribizi, Vakaga, Haute Kotto, and Lobaye prefectures. In terms of health, more than 300,000 people have benefited from basic and first level referral care. In collaboration with its partners, UNICEF has supported the delivery of 4,028 newborns by trained health workers in UNICEF funded health structures. More than 2,759 severely malnourished children aged under five were diagnosed and treated. In regards to emergency assistance, UNICEF provided emergency non-food items to more than 40,000 IDPs and refugees in Sam Ouandja, Ndélé, Kabo, Batangafo, Zémio, Moundoumba, Bangassou, Rafai, and M'boki. Negotiation is on-going for the reintegration of nearly 500 children still associated with armed groups or forces. UNICEF aims to provide community-based rehabilitation programme to these children as well as the 1,500 who were already demobilised in 2009, and provide access to education, psychosocial support, and medical care.

Due to the prevailing insecurity, children in conflict affected zones continue to suffer from a range of grave violations as listed under the Security Council resolution 1539 (2004), especially abduction, recruitment and sexual violence. All armed groups active in CAR continue to use children in the conflict. Elements of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have been active in the southeast of CAR since February 2010 where they have reportedly been involved in numerous atrocities against local communities, including abduction of children and women. UNICEF continued to lead the CAR monitoring and reporting Task Force and through its network of partners monitor and gather information on the grave

¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimate, June 2010.

violations of children's rights as established by the UNSC 1539 and 1612. 32 children abducted and used in hostilities by LRA who returned from captivity were assisted. 8 other children repatriated from DRC were assisted in care centres in Bangui and further assisted for family reunification and reintegration. Between 2009 and mid 2010, nearly 183 cases of sexual violence on women (76) and children (107) were also verified and assisted. Around 25 per cent of the perpetrators were armed actors, such as rebel groups and armed bandits.

KEY CHALLENGES

Delivering assistance to the northern areas remains difficult due to insecurity caused by bandits, and clashes between armed groups and government forces, and between pastoralists and local populations. Only very limited assistance could be provided to the Ndélé-Ngarba axis after the rebel attack in November 2009. CAR is in urgent need of funding required for the implementation of emergency programmes to address the humanitarian needs in the country. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), for instance, have had to suspend their activities at the end of 2009 to assist the IDPs by providing emergency assistance including protection, shelter and education and NFIs. Several other NGOs have expressed similar concerns regarding the lack of funding available in the CAR.

INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

UNICEF is strongly involved in the cluster mechanism in the CAR under the lead of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. UNICEF is the lead agency for the WASH, Nutrition, Education and NFI and Shelter Clusters. The World Health Organization leads the Health Cluster while UNHCR leads Protection and the World Food Programme leads Food Security. UNICEF is an active member of the Humanitarian Country Team, and also participates in the UN thematic group, supporting the government in close collaboration with the UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs. Several decentralized clusters have been created in the recent months in Paoua, Kaga-Bandoro, Ndélé and other humanitarian hubs, allowing organizations to coordinate programmes closer to where they are implemented. The establishment of decentralized clusters has also helped to better voice concerns from field offices in coordination mechanisms in Bangui. The funds provided by CHF were distributed among UNICEF-led clusters based on the field priorities. The guidelines on standardized latrines construction were developed by the WASH Cluster, paving way for the development of a national sanitation policy. The WASH Cluster is also working on a new and sustainable strategy for hand-pumps spare parts storage.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

For 2010, the total funding required was initially estimated at US\$12,317,590 but was revised to US\$15,187,221 as the funding needs increased due to the increase in the number of IDPs. The main contributions have so far been received from the CHF, CERF, Spain, the Japanese Government and AUSAID. Although donor contributions have decreased, the number of the population in need of assistance has increased - new humanitarian concerns have emerged in the east and the south-west of the country and the lack of funding will negatively impact on UNICEF humanitarian actions planned for 2010. UNICEF has so far only received US\$3,512,120. The most at risk activities include the Mother and Child Health Week which is expected to benefit 750,000 children, providing social support to vulnerable children, providing access to education for 150,000 children, and access to basic sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Funds received against the HAR 2010 (US\$)				
Sector	Original 2010 HAR requirements	Revised HAR requirements	Funds received	Funding gap
Health	3,929,415	5,002,926	1,392,092	3,610,834
Nutrition	2,332,600	2,759,467	443,500	2,315,967
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	1,003,125	1,186,697	832,016	354,681
Education	500,000	591,500	242,000	349,500
Child Protection	3,375,850	3,993,631	592,512	3,401,119
HIV/AIDs	299,600	700,000	10,000	690,000
Shelter/Non-Food Items	877,000	953,000	0	953,000
Total*	12,317,590	15,187,221²	3,512,120	11,675,101

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

² These requirements are in line with UNICEF requirements in the CAR consolidated appeal (mid-year review, 14 July).

EMERGENCY PROGRAMME PRIORITIES: JULY – DECEMBER 2010

The UNICEF cluster leadership role in WASH, Education, Nutrition and NFI/Shelter remains a priority. Currently only the WASH Cluster has a dedicated coordinator. The estimated cost related to the cluster leadership role taken on by UNICEF for the six remaining months of 2010 for the sectors Nutrition, Education and NFI/Shelter is US\$300,000 (not included in the table above).

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF will continue to support essential health-care services and therapeutic feeding programmes, including outpatient feeding and community-based case management and its partners at 55 health and nutrition centres in the conflict-affected areas. UNICEF will also focus on reducing malaria-related mortality through distribution of 1,100,000 long lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLITNs) to 896,000 households in the coming months.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): By the end of the year, adequate access to safe water and hygiene practices will be made available for 190,000 people (target increased from 120,000) through the construction of 100 new water points and the rehabilitation of 200 existing water points in schools and health centres. UNICEF will also ensure that up to 540,000 people have access to basic sanitation facilities through self-construction of improved family latrines and hand washing strategy.

Education: School attendance for 240,000 children (target increased from 185,000 based on increased needs) in crisis-affected areas will be ensured by creating an environment conducive to quality learning through training of teachers and caregivers, provision of school kits, early childhood development kits and textbooks, and improvement in school supervision. UNICEF, as Cluster lead, also plans to strengthen the capacity of education actors in emergency response. A national emergency education strategy will be developed to build on the on-going education activities in the country, while focusing on building the education system in the north to provide the much needed support to the communities that lack the necessary capacity or resources.

HIV/AIDS: UNICEF and partners will strengthen the capacity of the vulnerable communities to reduce their risk of exposure to HIV infection in emergency zones. This will include the development of behaviour change communication on HIV prevention, care and treatment, which will benefit 200,000 children, adolescents, women and communities via schools, youth centres and health facilities.

Child Protection: Forty thousand vulnerable children in the conflict-affected north will benefit from psychosocial and education support, through the creation of at least 20 new child-friendly spaces. Negotiation is on-going for the release of nearly 500 children currently associated with armed groups or forces, who, along with 1,500 children formerly associated with armed conflict, will have access to reintegration services, basic social services, psychosocial support, and also benefit from income-generating activities. In a high level meeting “To end the use of child soldiers across Central Africa” organised by UNICEF and the government of Chad, CAR government representatives signed up to the N’Djamena declaration reinforcing their commitment to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Shelter and Non-Food Items: UNICEF plans to preposition non food item kits for 25,000 IDPs and refugees in the conflict-affected areas of the country.