

PRESS RELEASE

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UNICEF Launches USD 1.2 Billion Appeal for Emergency Assistance

GENEVA, 4 February 2010 - As global attention focuses on efforts to provide life-saving support to the people of Haiti, UNICEF today released its *Humanitarian Action Report (HAR) 2010*. This annual report spotlights the most severe crises impacting children and women around the world and includes an appeal for additional assistance.

This year's report highlights the situation of children and women in 28 countries and territories that have been identified as being in the most desperate need, and seeks \$1.2 billion to help them. *HAR 2010* emphasizes the increasing importance of partnerships to meet the needs of children and families affected.

"Haiti was one of the countries UNICEF classified as 'in crisis' when the *Humanitarian Action Report* went to press, even before the earthquake hit," said Hilde F. Johnson, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director. "Faced with multiple hurricanes, in addition to civil unrest, the country was still in need of humanitarian assistance."

"The earthquake is a horrific example of another double disaster, - destroying the lives and livelihoods of the Haitian people and crippling the very infrastructure and systems needed for humanitarian actions to be effective," she said. "But we are achieving results. This week, UNICEF and partners will begin a campaign aimed at immunizing 500,000 children under the age of seven against measles, diphtheria and tetanus."

"As we maximize our efforts to speed up delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection for every child in Haiti, UNICEF also needs to engage in changing the lives of children all over the world," Johnson said.

"Children are suffering in many different places, and for a range of reasons. They all need our help. In 2009, large-scale and repeated natural and man-made disasters struck Southeast Asia, while emergencies in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan intensified," said Johnson. "Children are always among the most severely affected, and disasters put them at increased risk of abuse and grave violations of their rights, including sexual violence, killing and maiming, and forced recruitment into armed groups."

Every year, UNICEF responds to 200 emergencies all over the world. The *Humanitarian Action Report 2010* examines the most severe crises, those that require exceptional support.

The 28 countries and territories are included in the report on the basis of the scale and chronic or protracted nature of the crisis, the severity of its impact on children and women, and the potential to bring about life-saving results. In these cases, urgent action is imperative to save lives, ensure access to safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene, health, nutrition and to protect children against the worst forms of violence and abuse, and to provide children with education - even under the worst of circumstances.

The Humanitarian Action Report this year points to evolving global trends which pose cumulative risks to children including climate change, global economic volatility, and the changing nature of

conflict – particularly the widespread prevalence of sexual violence against children and women. These factors add to the vulnerability of poor communities and threaten the survival and fundamental rights of children.

The ongoing global financial crisis, compounded by unstable food prices, is causing increases in poverty and malnutrition, and severely threatening progress that has been made for children in some developing countries. Children and women have been especially hard hit. In 2009 many more poor families were forced to cut meals and reduce the quality of their food intake. According to a report by the Food and Agriculture Organization in 2009, more than 1 billion people worldwide were hungry – a rise of at least 100 million over 2008.

With the severity of the crises in Asia, be it in Pakistan and Afghanistan or the Philippines, financial needs are expected to more than double in 2010. However, the greatest needs are still in sub-Saharan Africa, where some 24 million people in the Horn of Africa are being affected by drought, chronic food insecurity and armed conflict in 2009. Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are facing internal and/or cross-border violence and mass displacement, and problems of humanitarian access. The situation also remains severe in Zimbabwe, deepening the vulnerability of the country's children and women.

The focus of this year's Humanitarian Action Report is partnerships. In all these countries and territories, UNICEF is working with partners to achieve results, including humanitarian organizations, civil society groups, the corporate and private sector, and foundations.

In recent years, UNICEF and its partners have invested significantly in risk reduction, emergency preparedness, early warning mechanisms, and response and recovery systems. The dynamic and changing nature of emergencies implies that consistent adaptation is necessary to ensure preparedness for future crises, and effective anticipation of trends for early action and recovery.

UNICEF's partnerships can help foster the needed innovation, outreach, participation and effective programming to make a difference for the ever-increasing number of children in need.

"Together with its partners, UNICEF continues to search for innovative ways to meet the desperate needs of children and women caught up in emergencies," said Johnson. "Only by working together can we effectively deliver on our mission to promote and protect children's rights, help meet their basic needs and enable them to reach their full potential."

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To read a full copy of the report, please visit: <http://www.unicef.org/har2010>

Attention editors and broadcasters: Multi media packages including photos and b-roll will be available at: www.thenewsmarket.com/unicef

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About UNICEF

UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments.

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