

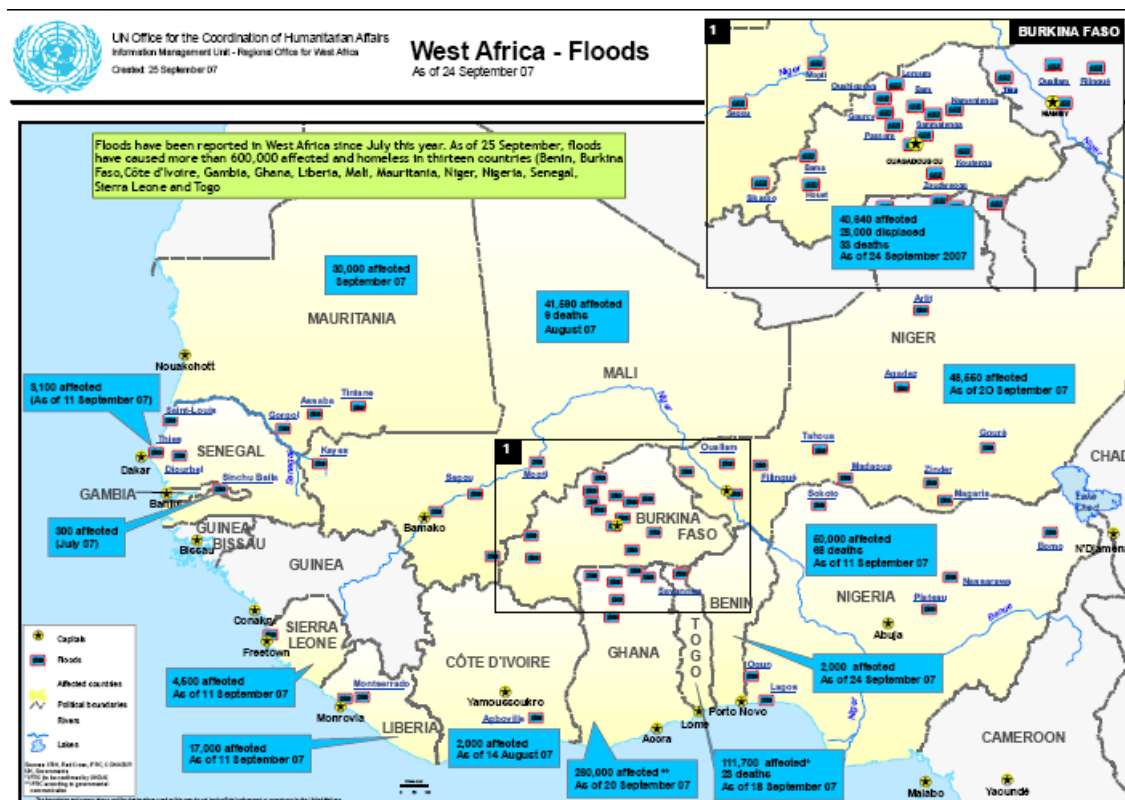
UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

WEST AFRICA FLOODS

9 OCTOBER 2007

UNICEF IS RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF FLOOD-AFFECTED FAMILIES IN GHANA, TOGO AND BURKINA FASO

- In Ghana, the UN has committed to respond to 75,000 people in most immediate need, which includes an estimated 15,000 children under the age of five.
- In Togo, an estimated 60,000 people have lost their homes and the floods and heavy rains have ruined 10 per cent of the farmland and contaminated boreholes—food shortages and disease are likely to occur in the future.
- Latest figures from the Government of Burkina Faso report that up to 93,000 people have been affected by flooding.



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Four weeks of heavy flooding have taken a damaging toll on countries in West and Central Africa, with hundreds of thousands of people displaced, several hundred killed, and homes and farmland swept away. According to the latest figures compiled by OCHA, the floods have affected over 800,000 people in 13 countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, The Gambia, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone, Benin and Ghana). In its emergency response, UNICEF is focusing in particular on northern Ghana, northern Togo and parts of Burkina Faso because of the large numbers of already vulnerable children in those countries, but UNICEF and its humanitarian partners have also been assisting children and their families in Benin, Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria.

In Ghana and Togo the floods have hit particularly poor regions with some of the worst health and nutritional indicators for children. In addition, across the region the flood waters have hit as the malaria season is peaking, and the standing water will provide breeding conditions for mosquitoes. These factors mean that even when the waters subside there will be longer term concerns.

In August heavy floods in **Ghana** affected in particular the three Northern regions. In view of the magnitude of the floods, the Government of Ghana declared the three northern regions as a Disaster Zone on the 12 September 2007. Government estimates indicate that 332,600 people living in the three northern regions are affected.

Disrupted infrastructure is a major impediment to accessing the affected areas and the distribution of relief assistance. The floods destroyed cropped fields and washed away household stocks, seed stocks and livestock. The majority of displaced persons are living with host families, placing increasing pressure on household food security. Lack of access to safe drinking water due to contaminated water sources also poses an immediate threat to people's lives and the sanitation coverage (existing latrines) in all three regions is very limited. Malaria incidence is increasing due to the higher number of stagnant water bodies.

Immediate needs thus include food, safe drinking water, and mosquito nets. If the immediate needs are not urgently addressed, there is likely to be high risk of epidemic outbreaks of water-borne disease and acute malnutrition. The nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women, children below the age of five and babies is of particular concern.

There is also a need to relocate the few families hosted in schools to alternate shelters to avoid further delays in opening of the school year which should have started on 11 September.

From 15th to 29th August, **Togo** experienced the most significant rainfall in the last 25 years. Rains continued to fall, in lesser intensity, until the 11th September, which has not allowed the situation to normalize. Today, entire areas of the north east Savanes region, from the borders with Benin and Burkina Faso across the Oti reserve areas and down to the Keran area, remain flooded. South of Dapaong and north towards the Burkina Faso and Ghana borders, flash floods swept away housing, animals and crops. Roads, bridges and schools have been destroyed and many communities are still inaccessible.

An estimated 60,000 people have lost their homes and around 100 bridges and culverts have been washed away. Wells, water tanks and latrines have been flooded or destroyed and people are currently drinking flood water. Over 20 deaths have been recorded and some 7,200 have been displaced. The displaced are sleeping with host families, in the open air, or in school buildings, many of which have also been damaged.

To make matters worse, Togo has lost 10 per cent of its farmland, and heavy rain has meant boreholes are likely to be contaminated – which makes both food shortages and disease likely in the future. School opening that was due 17 September was postponed to 17 October.

Adding to the already desperate situation in the country, new flooding has occurred in the south. In mid September the Government of Togo opened a large dam in the north to avoid it bursting and causing massive damage and loss of life. However, the water has traveled south in large volume and coupled with saturated soil and rivers flooding has been widespread in

the Lacs region. The water continues to rise as huge storms hit the region and even health centers have to be accessed by canoe. Some 7,000 people have been displaced and are sleeping in the open in dilapidated and damaged school buildings. Houses, crops and stocks have been lost. The health of the population is poor and there are fears of the spread of malaria and diarrhea/cholera. The limited funding available to UNICEF in Togo was used to provide some assistance to the flood-affected population in the north. Now additional funds are very much needed for the newly affected population.

The school year has been postponed by a month to 17 October to a. continue to provide shelter to IDPs in school buildings and b. raise funds for urgent flood repairs to make other schools useable again. UNICEF has a list of some 88 very badly damaged or destroyed schools and a list of 105 schools that need significant repairs to become useable again.

Meanwhile, the latest figures from **Burkina Faso** suggest that up to 93,000 people have been affected by flooding. An estimated 28,000 people have been displaced. Floods have wiped out thousands of hectares of farmland, threatening immediate hunger for at least 3,000 households and are likely to cause long-term problems as subsistence farmers struggle to come to terms with the loss of tools, animals and seeds. Homes, schools, dykes and bridges have also been damaged by the heavy floods. Schools are set to re-open on 1 October.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

GHANA

A Joint assessment report by Government and UN was released on 24 September 2007. The report identified food, access to safe drinking water and mosquito nets as the immediate needs. Also, there is still a need for shelter in specific areas where people are currently staying out in the open air or in public buildings. Medium and longer term needs include restoration of livelihood and rehabilitation of infrastructure to promote commercial activities and access to areas cut off by the floods.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

In terms of coordination, the sector coordination group for the Northern Region has been operational since the 17th of September. Three sectoral meetings have taken place so far at the UNICEF office. The sector coordination group meeting for the Upper East has been set up on the 28th of September.

- UNICEF's immediate response included the distribution of aqua tablets for household water purification, distribution of ceramic filters and hygiene kits as well as hygiene education.
- The procurement process for the delivery of the 5,000 ceramic filters has started. The NGO, Home Pure Water Project, is preparing a proposal to transport from Accra and train government field workers on how to set up the filters.
- The WASH communication plan for the Northern Region has been developed in collaboration with the Northern Region Environmental Health and Sanitation Unit (EHSU). EHSU has submitted a request for a mass-media campaign on hygiene promotion based on radio announcements, radio discussions and jingles. The NR-EHSU field workers are already in the field promoting safe hygiene practices in relation with the floods.

Health and Nutrition

- The first sector meeting took place on the 25th of September and a sector plan is being developed. Sector members have identified key interventions, categorized by immediate, medium and long-term interventions.
- The sector group has started to work on public health education aspects. A sub-group has been tasked to work on compiling public health messages to be used for

diarrhea, malaria, acute respiratory infections, cholera, breast-feeding and malnutrition.

Education

Damage to concrete schools appears to be limited but there are reports of collapsed mud schools. Due to increased poverty and loss of income due to the loss of livelihoods and crops in the affected areas, parents may send their older children to the cities to find work and/or keep their younger children out of school to work in the households or farms. They may also no longer have the resources to pay for the minimum school requirements.

Education authorities are gathering and updating information on flood-affected schools, which will be discussed during the upcoming sector meetings.

Protection

There are no reports of separated or unaccompanied children; the main protection intervention should be combined with the education response in getting children back to school and retaining them.

Ensuring that life-saving relief items reach all targeted beneficiaries is a concern, which all programmes will ensure through their sector response plans.

TOGO

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The Togo country office immediately accessed US\$ 100,000 worth of WASH materials from UNICEF Cote d'Ivoire and Benin.

UNICEF will provide water and sanitation equipment and expertise to 7,200 displaced people and 10,000 people whose water supplies have been affected. 10 water bladders, 20 collapsible tanks, 2000 jerry cans, 25,000 water purification tablets, 2000 buckets, 2000 cups, squatting plates, and soap will be distributed to the affected populations.

UNICEF is working closely together with the Togo Red Cross.

In the south the same level of inputs are needed urgently.

Health and Nutrition

In the area of health, UNICEF aims to provide emergency curative and preventative health inputs to 68,000 affected people. This will include health kits to 20 health facilities, 5 cholera kits for possible outbreaks, and distribution of 20,000 impregnated bed nets. The malaria risk is assessed as very high since the most affected people are sleeping in damaged homes with broken walls etc. Further health inputs are needed in the north, along with additional therapeutic feeding supplies to address the worsening nutritional situation. In the south health inputs for 25,000 people are needed and tarpaulin and mosquito nets are a priority.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

UNICEF is aiming to provide shelter to 7,200 people and will provide 5,000 sheets of tarpaulin, 5,000 blankets, and 2,000 pieces of baby clothing to the displaced and homeless population to prevent further exposure to the elements and reduce risk from associated illness.

In the north, UNICEF has already distributed the following supplies:

- 30 plastic sheeting rolls (50 m x 4 m)
- 10 rolls of rope
- 30 squatting plates
- 12,000 water purification tabs (240 boxes of 50 tabs)

- 3 water bladders 5000 liters + distribution ramps 6 taps

BURKINA FASO

A joint assessment mission involving the Government of Burkina Faso, UN Agencies, including OCHA and UNICEF, as well as local NGOs travelled from 21 through 23 September 2007 in the Northern and Centre South Regions. In addition to these two missions were also carried out in the Haut-Bassins region and the Cascades, Western Burkina Faso – from 26-29 September 2007.

As an immediate response, UNICEF has already provided high-protein biscuits, essential drugs, and basic relief supplies such as blankets, clothes, mats, plastic water containers, impregnated bednets and soap to the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity for a total amount of over 205,150 USD.

UNICEF and its partners have participated in inter-agency missions to the affected areas in order to assess the needs. Immediate needs include water and sanitation, food, prevention from epidemics, support to affected farmers and cattle breeders.

UNICEF has incorporated needs arising from the floods into its request to the Central Emergency Response Fund through the under-funded emergencies window. An inter-agency Flash Appeal is currently being finalized.

Ongoing UNICEF interventions to meet the needs of affected populations will cover the areas of health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, communication and protection. Particular focus will go to prevention of malaria, diarrhoea and other water borne diseases, increased support to supplementary and therapeutic feeding facilities, and provision of school materials and school furniture.

Water and Sanitation

UNICEF aims to provide water supply, basic sanitation and a hygiene-friendly environment to about 50,000 flood-affected people, in particular women and children. In view of the above, displaced people and hosting families will have access to potable water, and at least 80% of those affected and displaced will benefit from an access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF will contribute to prevent priority diseases under control of the Extended Immunization Programme such as measles, Polio and Yellow Fever. With stagnant water resulting from floods, malaria prevalence is likely to increase in flood-hit regions. Assuming that 10% of the total of flood-hit population (92,970 people) will likely contract malaria – children and adults alike – 1,700 children and 7,600 adults pregnant women who are the most at risk will be furnished with impregnated mosquito nets and insecticides. On the other hand, treatment of malaria will be provided to those who are sick.

So far as nutrition is concerned, UNICEF intends to monitor the nutritional status of children and reduce the prevalence of acute under nutrition to a level below the critical threshold (below 15%). UNICEF will also ensure de-worming and vitamin A supplementation among 6-59 month-children and post partum women, and encourage care practices for child survival, growth and development, as well as the well-being of pregnant and lactating women.

Education

UNICEF aims to provide continued access to basic quality education to at least 4,500 children of 7-12 years in the flood-affected areas of: Plateau Central, Centre, Hauts-Bassins, Nord, Centre-Nord, Centre-Sud and Centre-Est. UNICEF will also address the need for school

equipment and teaching/learning materials to avoid dropping out of 15,646 children at risk in the above-mentioned flood-affected regions.

Protection

UNICEF will provide psychosocial support to flood-affected communities of Burkina Faso, resulting in an increase of safe environments. In so doing, UNICEF will work to strengthen the response capacities of actors, in particular regional and provincial directions of the Minister of Social Welfare and National Solidarity.

3. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Table 1: Funds Received against Ghana Flash Appeal

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector (US\$)	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Health	500,000	168,201	331,799	66
Nutrition	200,000	80,765	119,235	60
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	750,000	235,756	514,244	69
Education	500,000	0	500,000	100
Total*	1,950,000	484,722	1,465,278	75

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

Table 2: Funds Received for Burkina Faso

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector (US\$)	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Nutrition	227,910	227,910	00	00
Health	200,000	00	200,000	100
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	160,000	00	160,000	100
Education	80,000	00	80,000	100
Protection	To be funded with internal resources	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total*	667,910	227,910	440,000	66

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

Table 3: Funds Received for Togo

Appeal Sector	Requirements by Sector (US\$)	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet requirements (US\$)	% Unfunded
Health	200,000	0	200,000	100
Nutrition	100,000	0	100,000	100
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	1,000,000	225,770	774,230	77
Shelter and non-food items	150,000	0	150,000	100
Total*	1,450,000	225,770	1,224,230	84

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

Details on the West Africa floods emergency response programmes can be obtained from:

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