

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION UPDATE

West Africa

Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana

1 January 2011

Over the next three months UNICEF requires US\$ 20.1 million to respond to needs of children and women affected by the post-elections crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries

- An overall 2.4 million persons in Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries are expected to be affected by the crisis according to interagency contingency plans. This includes 450,000 persons expected to be internally displaced in Côte d'Ivoire and 150,000 persons expected to move to the five neighbouring countries (Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana).
- As of 31 December 2010, the actual refugee population is estimated between 20,000 and 25,000 with more than 75 per cent being children and women. As the number of people crossing the borders from Côte d'Ivoire grows, their presence is anticipated to put a strain on the local host communities.
- Clean water, shelter and food remain the most pressing needs for internally displaced persons, refugees and host community members, in addition to protection, health and education services.
- With funds received, UNICEF will ensure continued emergency response and strengthen preparedness as needs arise in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Ghana.



1. ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

The unfolding political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since the presidential election on 28 November 2010 is now escalating into a humanitarian situation in the Western region and neighbouring Liberia as people flee violence. The United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights has substantiated allegations of 173 killings, 90 instances of torture and ill treatment, 471 arrests and detentions and 24 cases of enforced or involuntary disappearances. Actual numbers of election-related violence may be much higher. The outcome of the political crisis remains uncertain but the situation could degenerate. Soaring prices in Côte d'Ivoire are also affecting the sub-region as Abidjan is a main port of entry for many essential commodities.

As of 31 December 2010, over 3,000 displaced people have been reported in Côte d'Ivoire (Danane, Duekoue) and over 18,000 refugees have been registered in Liberia and 200 in Guinea. Thus far, the actual refugee population is estimated between 20,000 and 25,000 with more than 75 per cent being children and women. An overall 2.4 million people, including 450,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Côte d'Ivoire are expected to be affected according to interagency contingency plans in place. In addition, 150,000 persons expected to move to the five neighbouring countries (Liberia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Ghana) will require UNICEF support. An additional 250,000 neighbouring country nationals currently living in Côte d'Ivoire are expected to return to their countries of origin and will require assistance in transit camps. At least an additional 22,000 third country nationals are expected to be displaced to neighbouring countries.

Côte d'Ivoire

It is estimated that 40 per cent of the affected population in Côte d'Ivoire will be in the North, a region already weakened by a decade of socio-political instability. Health and nutrition constitute major concerns due to shortage of essential medicines, particularly in the centre and north western regions. The increased demand from IDPs could further stretch national health systems in affected areas. Thousands of children are at risk of yellow fever, measles and meningitis epidemics in Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries. Children are already very vulnerable to malnutrition. Latest data from a survey¹ carried out in 2010 in the eight regions of the north and west show global acute malnutrition rates up to 12 per cent² among children. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation are also a key priority. With national civil servants affected by the crisis, other basic services such as education may be disrupted. The political stalemate has led to an increase in the cost of living as prices of food ingredients have significantly increased in Abidjan as well as the countryside, a particular cause of concern in terms of food security and nutrition. In addition, there are confirmed reports of local markets not operating due to fear of insecurity. With 49 per cent of the population living under the national poverty line,³ humanitarian needs are also rooted in poverty – and compounded by periodic natural disasters, such as floods.

All parties to the internal conflict that engulfed parts of the country from 2002–2007 have maintained an armed presence in the country, leaving women and children particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, prostitution, exploitative labour. In case of a military escalation, children will be vulnerable to separation from their families and recruitment into armed forces and groups. The many foreign nationals who live in Côte d'Ivoire could face a high risk of targeted violence.

Neighbouring Countries - Liberia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Ghana

In the five neighbouring countries, children and women who have fled Côte d'Ivoire will require immediate assistance, with most urgent needs being access to food/nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation, and primary health services. Safe living spaces, places where children can play and go to school to get back some sense of normalcy and be protected from violence and exploitation are also essential. In case of a return of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, children from neighbouring countries will be vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups and militias.

Currently, persons seeking refuge in Liberia are being hosted by 23 local communities in eastern Nimba region. The situation in host communities is a particular cause of concern, especially in terms of food security, water and sanitation.

¹ SMART nutrition survey in eight northern and western regions and Abidjan, MoH/UNICEF/ WFP, preliminary report, June-July 2010.

² The World Health Organization (WHO) emergency threshold is 15 percent. Acute malnutrition exposes a child to high levels of mortality and disease.

³ Institut national de la statistique, 'Enquête sur le niveau de vie' [Survey of household wealth], INS, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2009.

2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

UNICEF has an existing field presence and ongoing activities in Côte d'Ivoire and all the neighbouring countries: Liberia, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Ghana allowing for adequate preparedness and rapid response. UNICEF had prepositioned stocks based on the most likely scenarios, however as the situation deteriorates additional stocks need to be procured to address increasing needs.

In order to address the immediate needs in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, UNICEF has scaled up operations and is reinforcing emergency preparedness by prepositioning vital stocks in Côte d'Ivoire itself and the surrounding countries. Stocks will be strategically positioned so that they may be deployed to areas or countries most in need or where access may be an issue, notably Northern Côte d'Ivoire.

UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR to ensure a comprehensive response to the refugees in Liberia and increase preparedness in the other neighbouring countries. At the regional level, UNICEF and other agencies, under the leadership of UNHCR is actively participating to the IASC coordination of the response. UNICEF is part of the interagency regional response and preparedness plan for Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries currently under preparation⁴.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Côte d'Ivoire

UNICEF will focus efforts on supplying sufficient, safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to reduce the risk of diarrhea, cholera and other water borne diseases for an estimated 182,000 persons, of which an expected 50,000 based in camps and 132,000 in host communities. Safe water points will be constructed and/or repaired in villages affected by the crisis and those accommodating displaced people. Family water and hygiene kits, including jerry cans, soap, and water purification tablets, will be provided to the vulnerable population allowing water to be treated and clean water to be stored for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene. In addition, sanitation facilities will be constructed respecting minimum standards and hygiene education will be promoted on key behaviours, including the use of latrines and hand washing with soap.

Liberia

In Nimba, UNICEF has already provided hygiene kits including jerry cans, soap, and water purification tablets, to 10,000 persons. Another 5,000 individuals have received sanitation items. Water provision, sanitation improvements and hygiene supplies are being mobilised for up to 50,000 people. WASH services will also be provided to temporary learning spaces, schools, health centers and child-friendly spaces as needed.

Neighboring countries - Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana

WASH services are expected to benefit 140,000 people. Depending on the situation, the WASH intervention strategy will vary. Water provision will be carried out through emergency water tankering, temporary water bladder systems, improved infrastructure (borehole/well repair and construction), and/or the distribution of jerry cans and water purification tablets. Sanitation improvements will be made principally through the construction and/or rehabilitation of family and collective latrines. Initial response situations could also require the temporary construction of defecation trenches. Hygiene education will be promoted to all targeted populations on key behaviors, including the use of latrines and hand washing with soap. Targeted distributions will also be made of critical WASH materials including jerry cans, buckets and soap. Additionally, in coordination with other sectors, WASH services will be provided to temporary learning spaces, schools, health centers and child-friendly spaces as needed.

Health

Côte d'Ivoire

UNICEF is committed to ensure availability of and access to essential and quality health services for all affected populations, by providing support to the national health system in Côte d'Ivoire in close collaboration with health sector partners, including WHO. Initial emphasis will be to ensure services for the 450,000 IDPs and 100 per cent coverage for prevention of epidemic diseases such as yellow fever,

⁴ Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan expected to be launched by mid-January 2011.

measles, and meningitis through vaccination campaigns and routine immunization, in collaboration with WHO and other partners. 14,500 persons living with HIV/AIDs will be assured continued treatment and PEP kits will be provided for victims of gender based violence.

Liberia

In association with the Government of Liberia, WHO, and implementing partners, UNICEF has been providing health kits, essential drugs and equipment to seven health facilities in areas of high refugee presence. Additionally, 3,000 children have been vaccinated since the onset of the crisis. Regular health services continue to function and are available to the refugee population, providing treatment of childhood diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia, as well as ensuring the availability and access to maternal and neonatal health and essential obstetric care.

Neighboring countries - Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana

UNICEF will preposition health kits, essential drugs, post- exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kits and equipment to ensure host country health services and partners are prepared to respond to the possible influx of 140,000 displaced in Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Mali. Health centers will be supported in host communities and established where necessary in transit centers, while monitoring and surveillance as well as service delivery will be bolstered to assimilate additional case load, while continuing services for host communities.

Nutrition

Côte d'Ivoire

UNICEF will coordinate the nutrition response and strategy with partners and further support the government and partners in assessments, monitoring and nutrition surveillance. Supplies of supplementary and therapeutic foods will be provided for the treatment of an estimated 14,000 children suffering from moderate acute malnutrition⁵ and 6,700 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Liberia

An estimated 1,000 moderately malnourished children will receive supplementary feeding and 350 children with severe acute malnutrition will be treated with therapeutic foods in nutrition rehabilitation units, outpatient sites and mobile health clinics.

Neighboring countries - Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana

UNICEF will ensure the timely and adequate provision of therapeutic and supplementary foods for the treatment of children suffering from severe and moderate acute malnutrition. Supplies and rehabilitation units are preparing to treat 4,436 children with moderate acute malnutrition and 1,540 children with severe acute malnutrition.

To protect the development of infant and young children, UNICEF will collaborate with health and nutrition workers to protect and promote breastfeeding and optimal infant and young child feeding practices. This work will be complemented with essential nutrition actions such as vitamin A supplementation and deworming along with continued monitoring of nutrition conditions.

Child Protection

Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

UNICEF is presently conducting a rapid assessment of the situation of children and women in Liberia and monitoring conditions through partners in Côte d'Ivoire. Family-tracing systems have been activated where required, alongside the monitoring of violence and exploitation of children and women.

In Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries UNICEF will support the creation of child-friendly spaces to provide children, adolescents and mothers with a secure environment and facilitate access to support services to those who have suffered from gender-based violence. Programming will include activities in reducing family separation, supporting family tracing, prevention of gender based violence and child recruitment into armed groups.

⁵ Expected to ensure 50 per cent coverage, in collaboration with WFP for the remaining 50 per cent.

Education

Côte d'Ivoire

The crisis is expected to impact the education of 40,500 preschool children and 67,500 primary school children. UNICEF will work with partners to allow children to continue to attend school in crisis-affected areas in an environment conducive to quality learning through the provision of temporary learning spaces for pre-school and primary school aged children, supplies for children and teachers, psychosocial support, recreation, non formal and pedagogical interventions.

Liberia and neighboring countries

The continuation of schooling in Liberia for 15,000 school aged children and 20,000 in other countries bordering Côte d'Ivoire will be assured through supplying the following: tents and tarpaulins for learning spaces, school kits, early childhood development kits, recreational kits, textbooks as well as curriculum, program documents and teachers' guides. School canteens will also be set up in partnership with WFP. UNICEF is also planning to support education actors (available teachers and caregivers) to increase their capacity to handle their classes in this special environment. The application of the principles of the Child Friendly Schools approach will ensure inclusiveness and equality, effective teaching and learning, safety and health, participation and community involvement. A communication plan will facilitate the smooth implementation of the program and parental training will be provided to ensure continuity from home to school.

Cluster and Sector Coordination

In line with UNICEF's emergency standards the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), UNICEF country offices in the affected region will ensure appropriate leadership and coordination mechanisms are in place to effectively respond to the needs of children and women affected by the crisis.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the Humanitarian Country Team has been activated and clusters have been launched since 20 December. UNICEF is leading the WASH, Nutrition and Education clusters, the Child Protection sub cluster and is actively participating in the Health and the Gender Based Violence (GBV) coordination mechanisms.

In **Liberia**, the humanitarian country team is adopting a comprehensive response to the crisis in which UNHCR is leading a multi-sectoral response for the refugees while sectoral working groups are addressing additional needs of displaced and host populations.

In the **neighbouring countries**, where the sector approach is being used, UNICEF is leading the following sector coordination groups: WASH, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection. Interagency contingency plans have been developed in line with the humanitarian reform and the cluster approach. Should need be, subject to approval by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, these offices will quickly adapt to the cluster approach.

In addition to coordination at the country office level, UNICEF participates in a regional inter-agency team led by UNHCR (with WFP, and OCHA) which is meeting regularly in Dakar to coordinate inter-agency support to the "Côte d'Ivoire +5" countries.

3. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

UNICEF is requesting **US\$ 20,121,401** for its humanitarian work in Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries over the next 3 months, to assist children and women as they cope with the volatile situation following the November presidential election. These requirements will be folded into the regional interagency Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) expected in January 2011 as well as the UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children Report expected to be launched in March 2011. These resources will be used both for immediate response, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, and for preparedness activities (including prepositioning of stocks) to be ready to respond to the crisis as anticipated in the interagency contingency plan. Should the situation significantly change, UNICEF will revise its requirements accordingly. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

Table 1. Estimated funding requirements January to March 2011

Sector	Requirements (US\$)
Water Sanitation and Hygiene	4,694,323
Health	3,432,442
Nutrition	3,800,589
Child Protection	2,096,529
Education	5,562,318
Cluster and Sector Coordination	535,200
Total	20,121,401

*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.

UNICEF wishes to express gratitude to all donors who continue to provide the unwavering support that enables UNICEF to address the humanitarian issues of the most vulnerable children and women in Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries.

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in the Côte d'Ivoire and neighbouring countries can be obtained from:

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