

GUINEA-BISSAU

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Guinea-Bissau is a post-conflict country that has yet to emerge from a decade of political instability. The destruction of social infrastructures occurred during the 1998–1999 war has been followed by lack of investment in the public and private sectors, resulting in further decay of the few infrastructures still standing. Government budgetary problems are recurrently resulting in non-payments of Government employees' salaries, which affects provision of the little (and low quality) basic social services available. This state of affairs has particularly harsh consequences on the most vulnerable groups: children, adolescents and women. The Government lacks the human and financial resources to invest in development, and enormous efforts will be required to improve the socio-economic situation.

Results from the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2006) indicate an increase in child mortality rates and very low access to primary education. The landmine/explosive remnants of war (ERWs) contamination has become a 'forgotten' emergency. Recent increases in drug trafficking and high unemployment rates make adolescents and young people out of school particularly vulnerable. Cholera is endemic in Guinea-Bissau. Since May 2008, the country is plagued by a massive epidemic, which as of 2 November has resulted in a total of 13,327 cases, with 218 deaths (fatality rate at 1.6 per cent).

PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

UNICEF is cluster lead for nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and protection and chairs the partners' group on education. In 2009, UNICEF-supported programmes are expected to reach at least 918,000 children and adolescents (among them 272,000 children under age five) and 60,000 pregnant women.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF will procure and distribute 60,000 insecticide-treated mosquito nets; procure essential emergency drugs, micronutrients and health kits for 30 health centres serving 500,000 people; train 60 health staff, 60 midwives and 120 community health workers; support 24 therapeutic feeding centres, benefiting at least 350 malnourished children; and train 48 health staff in the management of severe acute malnutrition.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: UNICEF will protect traditional wells in peri-urban neighbourhoods of the capital Bissau and other areas at risk; periodically disinfect wells and improve hygienic water fetching. UNICEF will promote household water treatment and handwashing through communication and demonstration campaigns as a low-cost high-impact health intervention. At least 300,000 people will be targeted.

Education: UNICEF will continue to support the development of the Education Sectoral Plan making sure that strategies clearly include children and adolescents out of school; train some 500 teachers in life skills, human rights, gender equality and education for peace; support community initiatives for the construction of at least 30 school structures through capacity-building and provision of materials.

Mine Action: UNICEF will develop a primary school mine-risk education (MRE) manual; provide refresher courses to at least 70 schoolteachers already trained in 2004 and train another 70 teachers; share MRE messages with groups of adults and children living in areas affected by mine/ERWs through radio and traditional communication channels in communities. At least 50,000 people will be reached, of which 20,000 children.

Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2009*

Sector	US\$
Health and Nutrition	535,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	856,000
Education	535,000
Mine Action	156,000
Total**	2,082,000

* Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other underfunded emergencies.

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