

LIBERIA

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The current high level of malnutrition in children (39.2 per cent are stunted, 7.5 per cent wasted and 19.2 per cent underweight) is exacerbated by high food prices. A 2008 inter-agency food security assessment found that the poorest households have less disposable income and are now resorting to drastic actions, such as putting their children to work, reducing spending on health care, and selling key productive assets including farm animals, equipment and tools to meet their food needs.

Although access to basic social services is improving, the government's coverage and its capacity to provide the services are still low. Malaria accounts for up to half of all illnesses in children, followed by acute respiratory infections (35 per cent) and diarrhoea (22 per cent). Household safe water and sanitation coverage is still low – 25 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. A lot of school infrastructure, furnishings and teaching and learning materials were destroyed and have not been repaired or replaced.

While the political situations have become calmer in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, there is still uncertainty of the future (including reactions to high food prices). The usually heavy rains are accompanied by fierce storms that often destroy physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and classrooms, necessitating temporary solutions as repairs are made. UNICEF will make provision for such eventuality and for emergency response for up to 10,000 children in order to quickly meet UNICEF's *Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies*.

PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

UNICEF is the lead agency for the nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) clusters, and a key actor in the health and child protection sectors. The funds raised through the *Humanitarian Action Report (HAR)* will provide humanitarian support to at least 2.5 million children, adolescents, women of childbearing age and the host community members most affected by the past conflict and natural disasters in Liberia.

Child Survival – (a) Health and Nutrition: UNICEF will procure and distribute essential drugs and equipment to 25 health centres; distribute 150,000 impregnated mosquito nets; support six therapeutic feeding centres; train 600 health staff in integrated management of childhood illness and malnutrition; and support the organization of mass immunization, vitamin A supplementation and deworming campaigns. These services will benefit up to 2 million children, women and vulnerable community members; **(b) Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** UNICEF will provide 200,000 persons with safe water and sanitation facilities through new technologies on household water treatment and storage; develop wells and sanitary facilities; and promote hygiene education and hygiene awareness programmes.

Basic Education and Gender Equality: UNICEF will provide learning materials and seats to 300,000 and 20,000 primary schoolchildren respectively; expand the accelerated learning programme (ALP) to four counties targeting 7,200 new learners; provide educational supplies for up to 10,000 children who may require emergency education support in 2009.

Child Protection: UNICEF will strengthen social protection interventions at household and community levels to support 10,000 children and adolescents most vulnerable and exposed to abuse, violence, increased child labour, HIV/AIDS and sexual exploitation. These actions will also ameliorate the adverse consequences high food prices are having on 1,000 most vulnerable households.

Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2009*

Sector	US\$
Child Survival (Health and Nutrition, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)	8,000,000
Basic Education and Gender Equality	3,035,000
Child Protection	2,060,000
Total**	13,095,000

* 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.