

Monthly Report

October 2009

UNICEF Niger



Table of Contents	2
Table of Acronyms	3
Summary of main UNICEF activities in October 2009	4
Country Summary	5
Health	5
Education	6
Water and Sanitation	6
Protection	6
Core Country Data	6
Humanitarian Overview	7
Flooding	7
Nutritional Situation	7
Political Summary	8
Insecurity	8
Humanitarian Update	9
Nutrition	9
Water and Sanitation	9
Protection	9
Education	9
Communications	9
Programme Updates	10
Protection	10
Education	10
Water and Sanitation	10
Communications	11
Funding Requirments	12
Contact	12

TABLE OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
ACF	Action Contre la Faim / Action Against Hunger
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
MBB	Marginalized Budgeting for Bottlenecks
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NIDs	National Immunization Days
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
SEJUP	Educational, Preventive and Judiciary Service
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

This report highlights UNICEF's actions in Niger in October 2009. It covers programmes throughout the country. This report does not summarise every activity undertaken. Instead it provides a sample of UNICEF's programming achievements and constraints in working in Niger.

Summary of main UNICEF activities in October 2009

UNICEF provides a multi-sector response to the 12,707 households affected by flooding in the region of Agadez. More than 3,200 children under-five were weighed and their height measured; long-term construction works for latrine blocks are planned; tents were set up to replace classrooms and radio broadcasting of health and protection related messages is ongoing, along with interpersonal communication sessions.

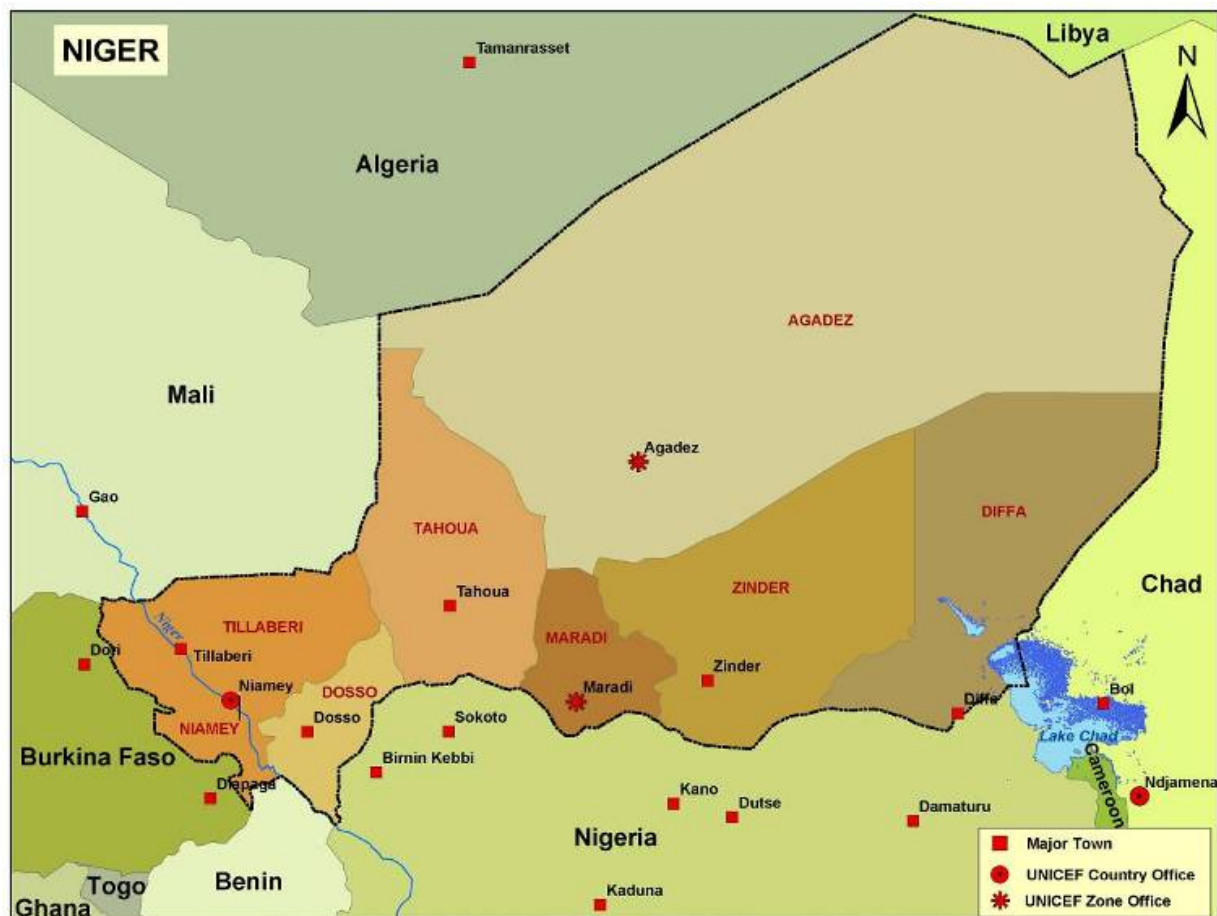
Rates of severely malnourished children in supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers have increased in the second half of 2009 in many regions. A further increase in admission rates of severely malnourished children is expected for the rest of 2009 and 2010.

A workshop on the Child Friendly-Girl Friendly School (CF/GFS) approach for governmental and NGO education partners will bring the total of CF-GF Schools nationwide to 700.

So far, Niger has reported only 4 imported cases by end of October and is therefore still eligible to the certification of the interruption of the transmission of the Guinea worm.

Communication and Nutrition Specialists, but also community leaders and villagers from the southeast of the country met early October to develop 3 sets of recipes for adequate complementary feeding of children, using local products.

CAP funding received to date is approximately US\$ 2,7 million, leaving a shortfall of almost US\$ 11.5 million.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Country Summary

Niger has a population of approximately 14 million inhabitants, of which eighty-four percent live in rural areas. Demographic growth is one of the world's highest with a rate of 3.2 per cent, and almost 50 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age. Poverty is widespread, profound and chronic. Its causes include natural, demographic, political and economic factors that present significant challenges to poverty reduction. 59.5 per cent of Nigeriens live below the poverty line. In rural areas, the incidence of poverty is 63.7 per cent and it affects women especially.

The vicious circle of under development is further aggravated by an 88 per cent¹ illiteracy rate of women and by their early marriage followed by early and closely spaced pregnancies, with an average woman giving birth to seven children.



In rural areas, women are especially affected by the incidence of poverty @UNICEF Niger/2007/Pirozzi

The main handicaps to the development of the country are (i) climate conditions and their impact on rural development, (ii) vulnerability due to the absence of economic diversification, (iii) high population growth (3.3 per cent p.a.), making Niger one of the countries with the highest fertility rate in the world (7.1 children per women, leading to the population doubling every 21 years), (iv) low levels of literacy and education, (v) the size of the country, added to the fact that it is landlocked, which both lead to high transport costs and raise the issues of

providing the essential needs of the population, (vi) and weak capacity in institutions and across sectors.

Health

Despite an important reduction of mortality rates for children under five years of age (from 274/1,000 live births in 2000 to 198/1,000 live births in 2006), the health and nutrition indicators remain alarming. The infant mortality is at 81 per 1,000 live births, while maternal mortality rate is 648 per 100,000 live births.

Malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal illnesses – often exacerbated by malnutrition - cause most child deaths in Niger.

This is attributable to poor access to health care, lack of access to water and poor hygiene as well as to inadequate dietary intake and weak feeding and care practices.

Immunisation rates among children have also improved, thanks to mass immunisation campaigns, but they are still too low to provide adequate protection. Fewer than three out of 10 children under one year of age are immunized against the six target diseases (tuberculosis, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio and measles).

Limited access and insufficient utilisation of health services added to the unfavourable socio-economic status of women are key factors to the high maternal and neonatal mortality rate. In 2006, only 46 per cent of pregnant women received antenatal care.

Nearly 70 per cent of women gave birth without the presence of a skilled attendant and only 17 per cent gave birth at a health facility. Women in Niger face a one in seven lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy or from birth-related complications compared to one in 8,000 in the industrialized world. Access to health care is estimated at 50 per cent of the population.

During 2006 and 2007, the Government has progressively implemented the removal of user fees for under-five child care, antenatal care and caesarean section operations.

This major change in policy has had an enormous impact on financial access to health. Utilisation of services doubled or tripled for children. The major risk linked to this new strategy is the difficulty of the government to cover the costs of this measure, specifically essential drug availability and accessibility. Another constraint is the extra burden on limited human resources in health facilities.

¹ DHS-MICS 2006

Education

Educational indicators, although on the rise, are among the lowest in the world with a gross enrolment rate at 63 per cent (compared to 57% in 2006/2007) and an 18 point disparity between girls (54 per cent) and boys (72 per cent) in 2007-2008.



Only one third of girls complete the primary cycle @UNICEF Niger/2007/Pirozzi

Of those children who actually enrol in school, more than half drop out; for students enrolled in the last year of primary school only 49 per cent of boys and 31 per cent of girls actually complete that year thus surviving the primary cycle. The education system faces enormous challenges in terms of access, quality, and achievement.

Protection

A large majority of girls (34 per cent) are married before the age of 15, and 57 per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 work.

Child trafficking and violence against women and children are major concerns. Implementation is limited of a legal and operational framework for the protection and care of orphans and vulnerable children, including children in conflict with the law.

Water and Sanitation

In Niger, the national coverage rate for drinking water is 54 per cent, and 87 per cent of the population does not have adequate latrine facilities with wide disparity between urban (57 per cent) and rural (94 per cent) areas. Poor sanitation and hygiene have a serious impact especially on child health.

Diarrhoeal disease, often caused by the consumption of contaminated water, is one of the main causes of death among children under five years. In some areas, ground water contains fluoride, which causes

bone deformation and mottling of teeth in the population. Cholera is still endemic in some Regions.



Young boys of Sarkin Yama are getting water from a well, southeastern Niger @ UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

Core Country Data

Indicator	Value
Population estimates for 2009	14,000,000
Human Development Index Rank (2007)	174 of 177
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	81
Child <5 Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	198
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000)	648
Fertility rate (no of children per WCBA)	7.1
Life expectancy at birth (2001 Census)	54.8
People living on below US\$1/day (2005 QUIBB Survey)	62.1%
Global Acute Malnutrition (U5) 2009 Nutritional Survey	12.3%
Global Chronic Malnutrition (U5) 2009 Nutritional Survey	39.3%
Children fully immunized against 6 diseases covered by the EPI (U2)	29%
Population using improved drinking water sources	46%
Marriage before age 15 (girls)	37%
HIV overall prevalence	0.7%
Women aged 15-49 years who are victims of FGM/C	2.2%
Primary School Enrolment (net) MoE Statistics Year 2007/08	53.5%
Primary School Enrolment for girls (net) MoE Statistics Year 2007/08	46%

Data from DHS-MICS 2006 unless otherwise stated

Humanitarian Overview

Flooding

Approximately 12,707 households have been affected, of which 6,813 in Agadez city itself. Some 1,065 houses have been destroyed. Outside Agadez, floods have damaged mainly farming land, which will have long-term consequences on the income of population.

The affected population is concentrating in 4 official sites in Agadez, plus two “non official” sites in and outside the city. Many families have stayed amongst the ruins and rubble of their homes to try and find and protect their belongings. Under the authority of the Agadez Region’s Governor’s Office, the infrastructure sub-committee has identified four longer-term sites outside Agadez for the permanent resettlement of affected populations. It is currently assessing water and electricity supply possibilities for these permanent resettlement sites.

Nutritional Situation

The majority of Nigerien families practice subsistence farming: only growing enough food to sustain themselves until the next harvest. In 2005, Niger experienced a food and nutrition crisis brought on by erratic rainfall, locust invasion and food price volatility, combined with chronic vulnerability. An otherwise manageable reduction in crop production resulted in an alarming spike in malnutrition cases among children younger than five years of age.



An undernourished child and his mother in a therapeutic feeding center in Zinder @UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

The June-July 2009 joint nutritional survey showed that an emergency situation is prevailing in the Diffa and Zinder regions, in the east and extreme east of

the country, with respectively 17.4 and 15.4 percent of the children moderately malnourished. The situation is considered as serious in Agadez (11.7%), Dosso (12.3%), Maradi (13.1%), Tahoua (10.9%) and Niamey (10.1%) with global moderate malnutrition rates rising beyond 10%. The prevalence of acute malnutrition exceeds 10% in all regions, except the Tillabery area, close to the border with Mali.

At the end of the rainy season, which has been inadequate in terms of both quantity and distribution throughout the country, the situation is likely to worsen with crops and animal husbandry compromised in many regions, seriously threatening food security at community level in the short term.

In addition, the use of the new WHO growth standards allows more children to be selected and treated before a deterioration of their condition. Therefore, it usually leads to a sharp increase in the overall number of malnourished children included in treatment programmes - the case load could then be multiplied by three or four.



Children and mothers queue in a therapeutic center in Zinder, southeast of Niger @UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

As a result of these two factors, rates of severely malnourished children in supplementary and therapeutic feeding centers have increased in the second half of 2009 in many regions, and a further increase in admission rates of severely malnourished children is expected for the rest of 2009 and 2010.

Niger needs to be prepared to respond to this challenge by ensuring that large scale active screening for cases of acute malnutrition is implemented; therapeutic food and more specifically Ready to Use Therapeutic Food is available on time and in adequate quantity; health workers are well equipped to manage cases of acute malnutrition; a network of NGO partners is involved in active case finding, referral and treatment when necessary.

Political Summary

Niger held a referendum on a new constitution on August 4, 2009. The proposed constitution, approved on August 14, will allow the president, in power since 1999, to stand for re-election after the December 22 end of his second tenure and thereafter seek repeated mandates. It also strengthens the president's powers by making him the "sole holder of executive power." The president will head the army, name the prime minister and have complete control over the cabinet.

The referendum was held despite strong opposition from political parties, unions, civil society organisations. Parliament was dissolved and members of the Constitutional Court substituted prior to the referendum. Concern has been expressed by the UN, African Union and the regional ECOWAS block while several bilateral donors have been threatening to suspend aid. The EU has suspended an aid payment and warned of serious consequences for its cooperation with Niger if the President carries out his plans.



Children are the most at risk in a situation of insecurity @ UNICEF Niger/2007/Pirozzi

Just two months after the referendum and in spite of threats of ECOWAS sanctions and of boycott from the Niger's opposition parties, Niger organised legislative elections on October 20. The electoral commission said the ruling party won a majority of votes, with the President Tandja's party receiving 76 out of 113 seats in the national assembly. Because the president refused to postpone the election, ECOWAS suspended Niger from the group.

Insecurity

Niger has been experiencing a situation of insecurity in the Northern part of the country since February 2007 due to an armed conflict between national security forces and the *Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice* (MNJ), the principal movement of the "rebellion" who demands greater control of oil and uranium reserves in the area. The country's main rebel group announced its ceasefire early October at a ceremony in the Libyan town of Sebha, where Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi was present. As a result, the president Tandja announced on October 23 that he granted amnesty to the MNJ rebels who laid down arms in June after two years of fighting. Still, two other Tuareg rebel groups have militants in Niger and are engaged in sporadic struggles for a greater share of the region's uranium resources.

UNICEF's zone office in Agadez has been functioning at a slow pace during the last two years due to this security situation and limited access. Presently, the main activities include emergency schooling and relief assistance to displaced people.



A total of 79,129 people have been affected by flooding in the region of Agadez, most of them are women @UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

Humanitarian Update

Emergency response

Some 12,707 households have been affected in the Agadez region by floods in September. Although an emergency response was first coordinated in September, activities in some areas will last until the end of the year, while the consequences will affect populations beyond 2009. UNICEF is supporting the government to offer better living conditions to the population in general, and to children in particular.

Nutrition

A large scale screening of malnutrition in children was conducted in partnership with government and four NGOs, with UNICEF's support and supervision. More than 3,200 children aged below five were weighed and their height measured. Some 833 children were found to be suffering from acute malnutrition.

Of the 504 children suffering from moderate malnutrition, only 358 were admitted for treatment, whereas out of the 254 children suffering from severe malnutrition (without complications), all were admitted in a therapeutic feeding center. Out of the 59 children who had been diagnosed as severely malnourished with complications, only 39 were admitted into the hospital, meaning many children did not receive treatment.

The Regional Hospital, received two tents, 150 blankets, 150 mats, 10 boxes of soap and 150 bednets from UNICEF in order to welcome a greater number of children.

Water and sanitation

Long term latrines will be constructed by UNICEF in the sites where population have resettled as well as in schools which were used as shelter by population. Construction works for latrine blocks in two of the resettlement sites as well as in 5 schools in Agadez are due to start anytime now.

Extension of water adduction networks to 3 shelter sites in Agadez city has been completed.

Protection

A referral system for psychosocial support and assistance has been established. Already five children have been referred to these services.

Complaints from affected households are centralized and registered before being forwarded to the relevant competencies.

UNICEF works with the police through the minors' brigade to conduct night patrols each day to prevent assaults against women and children, particularly girl children, and protect the most vulnerable.



During an emergency, women are more at risks as ever @UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

Also 1,000 torch lamps together with batteries and 1,000 mats were distributed to women affected by floods.

Education

Some 70 tents were set up, to replace damaged classrooms. A blackboard and 4 mats were sent with each tent. Some 24,707 children (49.08% of girls) attend primary school classes in Agadez and Tchiro.

Communications

Radio broadcasting of health and protection related messages is ongoing on private and national radio and TV until 31 December, targeting the 79,000 affected people in the three affected communes.

Some 63 trained animators and supervisors have been conducting 324 awareness-raising sessions on issues related health/nutrition, WASH and protection. These animators received second two-day training on leading interpersonal communication in the districts on October 21-22. They continue sensitization in groups three times a week until the end of the year.

At the same time, 24 animators conducted 146 awareness raising sessions, touching 2,739 people. More than 1,115 households have benefited from these sessions so far. In addition, 16 preaches took place in October by religious authorities and carrying sensitization messages. Another 11 are planned by the end of the year.

Programme Updates

Protection

Promoting the rights of people with disabilities

UNICEF, together with the NGO PRAHN (dedicated to working with persons with disabilities), held a workshop to sensitize micro finance institutions and other partners working in the area of disabilities on the International Convention relative to the rights of persons with disabilities. Aim was also to identify strategic areas of interventions and coordinate activities. By the end of the workshop, the participants:

- were aware of the rights of persons with disabilities in particular those of women of children
- had learnt more about the concept of disability and the difficulties faced by children and women with disabilities
- had identified the role that microfinance institutions could play in contributing improving conditions of persons with disabilities
- made recommendations to concerned stakeholders on how to better support persons with disabilities, in particular children and women.

Birth Registration

The birth registration campaign started in Agadez on October 25. This is part of a nationwide campaign targeting 1,000,000 children, of which 850,000 children attending primary school.



A birth certificate is the most visible proof of the Government's legal recognition of a child's existence as a member of society @UNICEF Niger/2007/Pirozzi

This free of charge registration is currently taking place in Agadez and Tchirozerine. However, security issues are hampering the outreach of this campaign to further villages and communities in the region.

In Niger, more than two thirds of Nigerien children do not have a birth certificate, which represents approximately 5.1 million children.

Education

A workshop was held from 27-28 October on the Child Friendly-Girl Friendly School (CF/GFS) approach for governmental and NGO partners working in education projects. The aim of the workshop was to put all partners on the same level of information on the principles and framework of the CF-GFS approach, to redefine the tools of this approach, and to fix the criteria and the incentives for the CF-GF Schools.



School attendance rates are increasing slowly, but girls' attendance is still much lower than boys' @UNICEF Niger/2007/Pirozzi

The workshop will enable more than 400 schools supported by other partners than UNICEF to engage in the CF-GFS process, ultimately bringing the total of CF-GF Schools nationwide to 700.

During the same workshop, partners worked on how to prevent violence in schools. An initiative will be launched in 20 pilot schools that are also working on the CF-GFS process.

Water and Sanitation

Eradication of the Guinea Worm

Within the eradication of the Guinea Worm project in Niger, six boreholes have been drilled in October, after a three months interruption due to the rainy season. A total of 29 boreholes is planned in the

region of Tillabery, for an estimated population of 17,400 inhabitants. Water management committees have been set up in these communities, and awareness raising activities have been held.

So far, Niger has reported only 4 imported cases by end of October and is therefore still eligible to the certification of the interruption of the transmission of the Guinea worm.

Communication

Communication for Development

Communicators, nutritionists, community leaders, community mobilizers and representatives of NGOs from two regions of Niger - Maradi and Zinder - met early October. The purpose of the workshop was to decide what and how to communicate to families on the need to provide children, aged 6 months to 2 years old, with a diversified diet based on local products.



In southern Niger, bean harvest will help to improve children's diet thanks to its high protein value @UNICEF Niger/2009/Holtz

In Niger, levels of malnutrition in children are on the rise, due to poor diet and frequent illness, and Maradi and Zinder, two highly populated regions are most affected. As many as 56 percent of child deaths are directly or indirectly associated with malnutrition.

In order to grow and stay healthy, young children need a variety of nutritious foods, on top of breast milk. In villages of south-eastern Niger, as of six months old, the child traditionally shares the family meal, which lacks the diversity to bring appropriate vitamins and micronutrients.

The participants of the workshop developed 3 sets of recipes for children aged 6-8 months, 9-11 months and 12-24 months, using local products that would meet the needs for a healthy diet.

Local products such as niébé, baobab leaves, peanut oil, sweet potato, and local fruits, such as mango, bananas, pineapple, melon, papaya, are used in those recipes and support child growth and development.

In addition to the recipes cards, messages on food hygiene were developed. All this will be used by more than 1,500 community animators enrolled by UNICEF and partner-NGOs in the promotion of essential family practices in both regions.

Child Participation

On October 13th a three-day workshop on youth empowerment took place in Niamey, with 90 participants from five regions of the country (Maradi, Zinder, Tahoua, Diffa, and Niamey). All girls and boys received trainings on communication skills and new programming approaches, based on results and Human Rights. It was also the occasion for UNICEF to inform these youth about Essential Family Practices and life skills, to prevent health problems and violence within their community. This meeting was a great occasion for all these young girls and boys to network and share their experiences - most of them are members of a local association or a radio station. The youth represents 75% of the total population of Niger and suffer from a lack of opportunities and education.



Young participants at the training session @UNICEF Niger/2009/Ousmane

Once they return to their communities, the participants will report and disseminate their knowledge among their peers and within their own group; they will design projects and working plans on local development (including environment and climate change) and youth participation (including with media). It will help to make the youth voice loudly heard and understood within the community and beyond.

Funding Requirements

UNICEF Niger is seeking to raise a total of US\$ 55 million in Other Resources (supplementary funding) over the 2009-2013 period. Presently, funding is urgently needed for its water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child protection programmes in particular.

Moreover, UNICEF Niger's requirements for humanitarian action in 2009 amount to more than US\$14 million to respond mainly to the worsening nutrition situation in Niger as well as cholera and meningitis epidemics and other emergencies. CAP funding received to date is approximately US\$17,8 million.

Major Contributions Received in 2009

Sector	Donor	Contributions (US\$)
Nutrition	OFDA	697,892
Nutrition	OCHA	9,344,601
Nutrition	ECHO	793,966
Nutrition	EC - Food Facility	3,940,241
Nutrition	Sweden	209,316
Nutrition	OCHA	422,984
Nutrition	Spain	1,629,458
Health (Meningitis)	ECHO	477,703
Health (Cholera)	OCHA	289,657
NFI	Global Thematique	43,578
Total		17,849,396

CAP Needs for 2010

Sector	Contribution (US\$)
Health	2,475,000
Nutrition	14,723,200
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	800,000
Education	700,000
Child Protection	550,000
Total	19,248,200

Contact

Anne Boher, UNICEF, Head Communication unit
 Email: aboher@unicef.org, Tel: +227 20722904, Mob: +227 96962159
 UNICEF Niger, PO Box 12480, Niamey, Niger. Web: www.unicef.org/wcaro