Democratic Republic of the Congo

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated dramatically over the past year. A surge in violent conflict in the Kasai and Eastern regions has forced more than 1.7 million people from their homes, including over 1.4 million people in the Kasai region alone. The number of internally displaced persons has more than doubled since January 2017, reaching 4.1 million, the highest number in Africa. More than 13 million people—constituting nearly 60 per cent of the population—require humanitarian assistance. In 2018, including 7.8 million children, and 13.6 million people are in need of safe water and adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities. Some 7.7 million people are facing severe food insecurity, representing a 30 per cent increase since 2016, and an estimated 2.2 million children will suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in 2018—12 per cent of the global caseload. The country continues to experience frequent and deadly disease outbreaks, including measles and malaria, and is undergoing one of the worst cholera outbreaks of the decade. Grave violations of children’s rights, including forced recruitment, killing, maiming and sexual violence, are key features of the conflict. Violence and insecurity are seriously impeding access to basic education for 3.4 million children across the country.

Humanitarian strategy

In 2018, UNICEF will continue to scale up its integrated, multi-sectoral response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, focusing on the Kasai and Eastern regions. The Rapid Response to Movements of Population (RRMP) mechanism will target areas affected by shocks and mass displacement, and provide a multi-sectoral package covering non-food items, multipurpose unconditional cash transfers and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. In areas affected by conflict and disease outbreaks, UNICEF and partners will reinforce access to primary health care at the community and health centre levels. Child protection services will include the provision of psychosocial support and recreational activities to children who are displaced, separated, unaccompanied, formerly associated with armed groups, or survivors of sexual violence. As part of cholera prevention and response, UNICEF will pre-position WASH supplies, including for water purification and chlorination, and will support the renovation/construction of latrines/water points. UNICEF will increase outreach for screening, referral and treatment of SAM to absorb a larger share of the national SAM burden. WASH-in-nutrition assistance will also be expanded for SAM prevention. UNICEF will continue to lead the education, non-food items and shelter, nutrition and WASH clusters and the child protection sub-cluster and co-lead the cash working group.

Results from 2017

As of 31 October 2017, UNICEF had received US$52.5 million against the US$165 million appeal (32 per cent funded). Despite this funding gap, UNICEF reached more than 2 million vulnerable people with nutrition, health, WASH, education and child protection support. UNICEF provided basic WASH services to 435,000 people affected by natural disasters and conflict, and responded to the unprecedented cholera outbreak by providing WASH response packages to more than 580,000 persons in cholera-prone zones. Nutrition interventions benefited 160,458 SAM-affected children admitted for therapeutic care, with a cure rate of nearly 85 per cent. More than 1.3 million children were vaccinated against measles; and medical drugs were provided to treat 26,000 cholera cases. In addition, some 62,000 displaced, refugee and returnee children gained safe access to community spaces for socialization, play and learning. Given the important increase in population movement, the RRMP played a key role in assisting internally displaced persons, returnees and host families through a multi-sectoral package covering non-food items, multipurpose cash transfers and WASH services, reaching more than 866,000 people. More than 9,000 children (including 4,700 girls) were reintegrated into temporary learning spaces in the Kasai Region.

Humanitarian Action for Children

2018 programme targets:

Nutrition
- 1.1 million children aged 6 to 59 months with SAM admitted for therapeutic care
- 870,000 children aged 6 months to 14 years vaccinated against measles
- 520,000 people affected by conflict and disease outbreaks supported to access primary health care

WASH
- 1.2 million people affected by natural disasters and conflict provided with access to WASH services
- 1.5 million persons in cholera-prone zones and other epidemic-affected areas benefitting from preventive and WASH cholera response packages
- 550,000 severely malnourished children and host families receiving WASH assistance

Child protection
- 6,000 children associated with an armed group provided with reintegration support
- 11,700 unaccompanied and separated children identified and reunited with their families
- 5,200 identified survivors of sexual violence provided with a comprehensive response

Education
- 510,000 girls and boys aged 5 to 11 years affected by conflict or natural disasters received access to quality education and psychosocial activities

RRMP
- 875,000 internally displaced persons benefitted from multi-sectoral assistance

Total people in need:
- 13.1 million
- 7.8 million
- 10.5 million
- 6.3 million

Total children (<18) in need:
- 10.5 million

Total children to be reached:
- 2 million

Total people to be reached:
- 7.8 million

Total children (<18) to be reached:
- 6.3 million

Total people to be reached:
- 10.5 million

Total children (<18) to be reached:
- 6.3 million

Total people in need:
- 13.1 million
- 7.8 million
- 10.5 million
- 6.3 million

Total children (<18) in need:
- 10.5 million

Total children to be reached:
- 2 million

Total people to be reached:
- 7.8 million

Total children (<18) to be reached:
- 6.3 million
NUTRITION
Children aged 6 to 59 months with SAM admitted for therapeutic care
388,262 160,458 310,609 160,458

HEALTH
Children aged 6 months to 14 years vaccinated against measles
People affected by conflict and disease outbreaks having received access to primary health care
300,000 158,885

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE
Natural disaster and conflict-affected people with access to WASH basic services
Persons in cholera-prone zones benefitting from WASH cholera response packages
SAM-affected care/mother and children who receive hygiene kits with key hygiene message

CHILD PROTECTION
Children formerly associated with armed forces/groups released and provided with temporary assistance
Separated and unaccompanied children identified and reunited with their families
Displaced, refugee and returnee children provided with safe access to community spaces for socialization, play and learning
Identified survivors of sexual violence provided with a comprehensive response

EDUCATION
Girls and boys aged 5 to 11 years affected by conflict or natural disasters given access to quality education and psychosocial activities
School-aged boys and girls aged 5 to 11 years affected by crisis receiving learning materials
Teachers trained on learner-centred methodologies, peace education, conflict/disaster risk reduction and psychosocial support

NON-FOOD ITEMS/SHELTER
People accessing essential household items and shelter materials

MULTIPURPOSE CASH-BASED ASSISTANCE
People assisted with an unconditional cash grant

Funding requirements
In line with the revised inter-agency Humanitarian Response Plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2017–2019), UNICEF is increasing its funding request from US$165,067,070 in 2017 to US$268,121,004 in 2018 to support children and families in need of humanitarian assistance. The largest budget increase is for the nutrition response, given the three-fold increase in the targets. Without adequate and timely funding in 2018, UNICEF and its partners will not be able to address the critical humanitarian needs of children and their families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Results are through 31 October 2017 unless otherwise noted.

1 UNICEF did not achieve some targets in WASH, child protection and education due to three key factors: 1) funding gap: only 32 per cent of the 2017 appeal was mobilized; 2) security and access issues: attacks against humanitarian staff increased in 2017 and armed conflict spread in several areas reporting humanitarian needs; and 3) physical access and logistics were challenging in most implementing areas, which limited implementation capacity.

2 Child protection sub-cluster targets are lower than UNICEF targets because they do not include the Kasai caseload.


the geographical scope of service provision in the Kasai Region. The RRMP has also been re-established in South Kivu. Of the 875,000 beneficiaries, 787,500 will receive WASH support; 437,500 will receive cash support; 437,500 will receive non-food item support; 113,750 will receive education/protection support; and 105,000 will receive health/nutrition support.

Who to contact for further information:

Tajudeen Oyewale  
Representative ai - Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Tel: +243-818840 068  
Email: toyewale@unicef.org

Grant Leaity  
Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7150  
Email: gleaity@unicef.org

Carla Haddad Mardini  
Director, Public Partnership Division (PPD)  
Tel: +1 212 326 7160  
Email: humanitarian.ppd@unicef.org