Burundians across the country, especially women and children, remain vulnerable to humanitarian crises due to high levels of poverty. This precarious situation is compounded by natural disasters (i.e., floods, landslides and rainfall deficits), population movements, epidemics (e.g., cholera and peaks of malaria) and the risk that Ebola will spread into the country. Some 1.74 million people, including 976,200 children, are affected by the humanitarian crisis and the economic downturn, and will require humanitarian assistance in 2020. This includes some 60,000 children at risk of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). With the ongoing outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi is a priority 1 country for Ebola preparedness. While important progress has been made in 2019, critical gaps remain in ensuring Ebola prevention and adequate capacities to respond. Given that the two cholera epidemics of 2019 remain difficult to contain and malaria cases continue to spike, the health situation is worrying. In addition, 110,000 people are displaced inside the country, primarily due to natural disasters. The ongoing voluntary repatriation process within the tripartite agreement facilitated the return of 15,000 Burundians (57 per cent children) in 2019. The presidential elections scheduled for 2020 are expected to influence these dynamics.

Humanitarian strategy

In 2020, UNICEF will reinforce the resilience of systems and communities by increasing disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness interventions and expanding multi-sectoral and integrated responses to reduce and mitigate the risks of and needs associated with population movement, health epidemics, natural disasters and malnutrition. In line with the national contingency plan, UNICEF will also target those in priority districts who are most vulnerable to the spillover of the Ebola outbreak with prevention and preparedness activities emphasizing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), risk communication and community engagement, as per UNICEF’s comparative advantage in Burundi. UNICEF will provide a package of gender-sensitive interventions comprising life-saving health services; malnutrition prevention and treatment; access to safe water and sanitation; hygiene promotion; and critical and risk-informed education and protection services. Efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities in humanitarian response are currently limited but will be expanded in 2020. Communication for development will be mainstreamed across all sectors of intervention and mechanisms for engaging communities in social cohesion, risk reduction and improved access to basic services will be strengthened. As part of its coordination responsibilities, UNICEF will continue to lead the WASH, nutrition and education sectors and the child protection sub-group.

Results from 2019

As of 30 September 2019, UNICEF had US$7 million available against the US$10 million appeal (70 per cent funded). In 2019, UNICEF responded through an integrated package of interventions in the most affected provinces in Burundi, including areas affected by displacement, return and epidemics and health districts at risk of Ebola. As of September 2019, UNICEF had reached some 155,000 children with critical child protection services and provided essential therapeutic feeding treatment to more than 31,000 children suffering from SAM. The UNICEF WASH response continued to address current vulnerabilities and linked these efforts to longer-term resilience-building and preparedness activities, especially in cholera-prone areas and districts at risk of Ebola. Some 350,000 affected/at-risk people accessed safe and clean water with UNICEF support and 571,000 people received hygiene messages and key life-saving information. Despite limited funding, UNICEF and line ministries provided access to learning opportunities for some 29,000 school-aged children, including internally displaced and returnee children, and supplied the Government with stocks of essential drugs, including for malaria and cholera treatment, benefiting 70,000 persons. UNICEF reached 1.3 million people with key Ebola prevention messages and has continued its efforts in risk communication and community engagement to prepare for and respond to epidemics.

2020 programme targets

Nutrition
- 45,000 children aged 6 to 59 months affected by SAM admitted for treatment
- 550,000 children assessed for acute malnutrition through mass screening
- 50,000 children vaccinated against measles
- 200,000 people, at least half of them children, provided with essential drugs

WASH
- 100,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene
- 320,000 people in cholera and Ebola high-risk areas reached with key messages on hygiene practices

Child protection
- 160,000 children accessing critical child protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support
- 80,000 children and women accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions

Education
- 95,000 school-aged girls, boys and adolescents accessing formal and non-formal education opportunities
- 6,500 education duty bearers trained on education in emergencies and risk reduction
- 500,000 school-aged girls and boys reached with Ebola preparedness messages

Communication for development
- 2,000,000 people reached with key life-saving/behaviour change messages on Ebola prevention and control
- 165,000 people reached with information on access to basic services in emergency situations
**Funding requirements**

UNICEF is requesting US$16.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children in Burundi in 2020. Without timely and adequate funding, UNICEF will be unable to scale up its humanitarian response to address the critical needs of women and children in the current context of heightened vulnerability, recurrent epidemics, child malnutrition, natural disasters and population movements. UNICEF also urgently needs to increase preparedness efforts to address the risk of the Ebola outbreak spilling over from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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1 Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency needs and planning documents. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ‘Burundi: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview’ (draft), OCHA, October 2019.

2 District Health Information System II, December 2018. The results of the recent Joint Approach for Nutrition and Food Security Assessment (January 2019) show a deterioration in the nutritional situation, with 5.1 per cent of children suffering from acute malnutrition, compared with 4.5 per cent in 2018.


5 Available funds include US$3.1 million received against the 2019 appeal and US$3.9 million carried forward from the previous year.

6 This is based on the number of children to be reached (see endnote #10) plus the adult population target for people to be reached with key messages on hygiene practices (140,800). An estimated 56 per cent of the target population are women and girls (841,648), according to Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ‘Burundi: 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan’, OCHA, 2018. According to the 2011 World Health Organization (WHO)/World Bank report, persons with disabilities make up 15 per cent of the population. UNICEF Burundi plans to strengthen the collection of disaggregated data related to disabilities through its 2020 programming.

7 This includes inter-agency coordination mechanisms and inter-agency coordination mechanisms and inter-agency coordination mechanisms for the collection of data.

8 This is based on the highest programme coverage for nutrition through the mass screening of 550,000 children plus 80,000 children targeted for education (84 per cent of the target of 950,000 children accessing formal and non-formal education opportunities). An estimated 53 per cent of the target population below 18 years are girls (333,900), according to ‘Burundi: 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan’, OCHA, 2018. According to the 2011 WHO/World Bank report, children with disabilities make up 10 per cent of the population.

9 Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

10 This includes the pre-positioning of inter-agency emergency health kits related to Ebola preparedness. This target has decreased compared to 2019 mainly due to the reduced number of people finally repatriated against the previous forecasts made.

11 This is in line with the Sphere standard of 15 litres of water per person per day and water quality standards on residual chlorine and turbidity. This target has decreased compared to 2019 mainly due to the priority to support access to water in health facilities to improve infection prevention and control, which will reduce the number of direct beneficiaries as the intervention will more broadly benefit the catchment population.

12 Figures are provisional estimates. Financial requirements are subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency appeals/planning documents.