Central African Republic

The Central African Republic is experiencing a protracted and complex humanitarian crisis. Over 580,000 people are internally displaced and 606,000 are living as refugees outside of the country. While 350,000 people returned in 2019 – often to devastated villages – one in five Central Africans has fled conflict. Despite the signing of a peace agreement in early 2019, 2.6 million people, including 1.2 million children, will need humanitarian assistance in 2020, representing 59 per cent of the country’s population. Acute needs are expected to increase during the year, from 1.6 million to 1.7 million people, due to continuing violence and destruction, diminishing capacities for resilience, limited access to basic services, underfunding, access constraints and insecurity. In 2020, over 49,000 children under 5 years will need treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) – a 14 per cent increase from 2019 – and over 1 million children will lack access to safe water. Fifteen per cent of schools remain closed due to conflict, and one in five or half a million children will be out of school as a result. Low levels of immunization may lead to new epidemic outbreaks. Almost 800,000 children (one third) will need protection, including from gender-based violence.

Humanitarian strategy

Working with partners in the country’s most troubled areas, and using pre-positioned supplies, UNICEF will prioritize child-centered life-saving interventions and risk reduction for crisis-affected, displaced and returning people in the Central African Republic. Working through the Rapid Response Mechanism, UNICEF will conduct assessments on new crises and provide essential household items and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support to vulnerable people newly affected by shocks. In coordination with partners, UNICEF will provide complementary responses in child protection, health and/or education, as well as follow-up WASH interventions and SAM treatment, using mobile approaches when relevant. Child protection support will include psychosocial support and services addressing gender-based violence and children’s release from armed groups and reunification with their families. Out-of-school and other vulnerable children will be supported to access safe learning spaces and quality education. UNICEF will continue to lead the nutrition, WASH and education clusters and the child protection sub-cluster, and work with line ministries to reinforce the Government’s capacity in humanitarian coordination and response, while increasing its focus on accountability to affected populations and cash-based interventions. As much as possible, UNICEF will ensure that humanitarian assistance is followed up on with recovery and development-oriented community-based programming.

Results from 2019

As of 31 August 2019, UNICEF had US$32.3 million available against the US$59 million appeal (55 per cent funded). In 2019, UNICEF and partners delivered critical emergency assistance to conflict-affected populations across the country, including in the most hard-to-reach and insecure areas. The UNICEF response has been increasingly multi-sectoral, with 70 per cent of Rapid Response Mechanism interventions for essential household items and WASH complemented by at least one other sector. By August, the Rapid Response Mechanism had assisted 161,000 people with non-food items and 56,600 people with WASH support. UNICEF co-led the response to the polio epidemic, reaching 650,000 children with vaccination, and ensured SAM treatment for over 18,000 acutely malnourished children. UNICEF and partners released 955 children from armed groups and assisted nearly 1,200 women and girls who were victims of gender-based violence – in both cases surpassing 2018 results. UNICEF reached 76,000 crisis-affected children with education and supported the Ministry of Education to set up and deploy an Emergency Response Team. Despite dedicated fundraising efforts and consistent support from an increasing number of donors, UNICEF is unlikely to reach its 2019 targets in some sectors – particularly sanitation and education – due to underfunding.
NUTRITION

Children aged 6 to 59 months suffering from SAM admitted for treatment 30,570 18,840 30,570 18,840
Caregivers of children reached with infant and young child feeding counselling 71,975 50,252 57,580 26,673

HEALTH

Children under 5 years vaccinated against polio 750,957 650,549
Children under 5 years vaccinated against measles 700,000 30,953
Children under 5 years and women accessing primary health care in crisis-affected areas managed services 82,068 70,350

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Crisis-affected people with access to safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene 771,224 573,477 400,000 209,473
Crisis-affected people accessing appropriate sanitation facilities 428,900 205,453 150,000 13,160
Crisis-affected girls/women accessing menstrual hygiene management services 210,000 2,794 45,000 554

CHILD PROTECTION

Children reached with psychosocial support through child-friendly spaces 145,000 110,369 110,000 52,874
Children released from armed forces/groups reached with reintegration support 5,550 1,032 3,000 955
Women and children reached with gender-based violence prevention and response interventions 1,500 1,157

EDUCATION

Children in crisis-affected areas accessing education 160,000 96,744 120,000 76,100
Children who received learning materials 590,000 277,879 442,500 29,110

RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM

Acutely vulnerable people rapidly provided with non-food items after a shock 250,000 161,025
People who received rapid WASH assistance after a shock 150,000 56,620

UNICEF is requesting US$57 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children in the Central African Republic in 2020. In line with the Humanitarian Response Plan, this amounts to a slight decrease compared with 2019, but includes a significant increase for the nutrition component due the deteriorating situation, which will require treating more acutely malnourished children and expanding prevention and counselling efforts. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the country’s continuing crisis and provide critical life-saving assistance to conflict-affected displaced people, returnees and host communities.

Funding requirements

UNICEF is requesting US$57 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children in the Central African Republic in 2020. In line with the Humanitarian Response Plan, this amounts to a slight decrease compared with 2019, but includes a significant increase for the nutrition component due the deteriorating situation, which will require treating more acutely malnourished children and expanding prevention and counselling efforts. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the country’s continuing crisis and provide critical life-saving assistance to conflict-affected displaced people, returnees and host communities.

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1 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), July 2019; and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), August 2019.
2 OCHA, July 2019.
4 Ibid.
5 Three humanitarian workers were killed in 2019 and 28 were wounded.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Including through UNICEF’s participation in the inter-agency Common Cash Systems pilot initiative.
9 Available funds include US$20.4 million received against the 2019 appeal and US$11.9 million carried forward from the previous year.
10 This includes food distributions by World Food Programme (WFP) partners.
12 Ibid.
13 This figure is the rounded sum of the number of children to be reached (see endnote 14) and the number of adults to be provided with safe water (54 per cent of 306,000 = 165,240). This includes food distributions by World Food Programme (WFP) partners.
14 This figure is the rounded sum of the number of children under 5 years targeted by the national polio campaign in the regions where UNICEF will lead (472,722); and the number of children aged 5 to 17 years targeted to receive individual learning materials (96 per cent of 360,000 = 349,600). This includes an estimated 391,000 girls and 391,000 boys. Government of the Central African Republic.
15 Measles vaccination was already part of the humanitarian appeal, but with a much lower target, which is why it was not initially highlighted. The proposed target is based on the latest discussions with the Ministry of Public Health and Population and other partners, though planning is not yet final.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2020 requirements (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>11,700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and HIV and AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>6,800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Rapid Response Mechanism</td>
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<td>Communication for development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cluster/sector coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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