South Asia

In 2011, 211 million people were killed or affected by natural disasters in South Asia\(^1\) – making up 86 per cent of the total number of people killed or affected worldwide. The scale and severity of disasters are increasing globally and regionally. With 613 million children under 18,\(^2\) South Asia accounts for more than a quarter of the world’s children, and addressing their needs is critical in both disaster response and disaster risk reduction planning.

South Asia is also characterized by areas of political instability and insecurity, which has negatively affected progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and fulfillment of children’s and women’s rights. Afghanistan’s future direction remains uncertain in light of planned elections and the withdrawal of foreign troops in 2014. Expected elections in Nepal in November 2012 and in Maldives, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2013 are unlikely to resolve entrenched political tensions, which could head these countries into periods of instability and further aggravate the situation of the most vulnerable populations. In Sri Lanka, although recovery efforts are being implemented, the road to reconciliation is long and fragile.

Planned results for 2013

In 2013, UNICEF’s Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) will strengthen the emergency preparedness capacity of UNICEF country offices and partners in South Asia through the roll-out of a new global emergency preparedness and response training package. ROSA will further support UNICEF country offices meeting their cluster commitments, as well as delivering programmes for children and women in humanitarian situations.

ROSA will continue to strengthen UNICEF country offices’ and partners’ expertise in risk reduction and advance the integration of development and humanitarian action through risk-informing planning and programming. This would contribute to strengthening long-term community resilience by building the coping and adaptive capacities of vulnerable communities and institutions, including social protection mechanisms. Further support to Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will be provided by ROSA.

Regional support will also be provided for knowledge management, notably for humanitarian performance monitoring, to strengthen country capacity for overall results monitoring, including in humanitarian settings. Partnerships with regional institutions – such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) – will be strengthened in terms of disaster risk management.

Funding for emergency preparedness and response will allow ROSA to support a small and flexible emergency preparedness and response grant mechanism that will be made available to any qualifying UNICEF country office in South Asia. This will enable UNICEF to pre-position emergency relief supplies and support emergency response actions at the country level by deploying surge support staff, including cluster coordinators, and dispatching relief items. These actions can be taken in cases where national authorities might not always prioritize inter-agency appeals but may welcome international support in specific sectors of response, or pending the issuance of a formal inter-agency flash appeal or Central Emergency Response Fund allocation.

Results from 2012

- ROSA received US$437,580, or 11 per cent of the required US$3.9 million to carry out its activities in 2012.
- Provided technical support for mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and emergency preparedness actions into UNICEF key programming documents. New country programme documents for India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were reviewed through a DRR/emergency preparedness lens.
- Monitored country offices’ early warning analyses and provided additional regional-level early warning analysis. Prior to the regional monsoon season, a quick self-assessment checklist was provided to all countries in the region to evaluate their level of preparedness and identify gaps.
- Spearheaded an Inter-Agency Contingency Planning mission to Maldives with other key humanitarian actors in the region to respond to a potential escalation of political unrest (February).
- Provided in-country direct surge support to UNICEF Pakistan for the internally displaced persons emergency in Federally Administered Tribal Areas /Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (May) and for the monsoon flood response in Sindh (October).
- Co-facilitated a training workshop on UNICEF emergency preparedness and response for standby partners (May).
- Supported UNICEF India in organizing a simulation and training on coordination and rapid assessment in support of the state government of Assam (October).
- Organized and led a simulation exercise for UNICEF Afghanistan to test its emergency preparedness systems (July).
- Reviewed UNICEF emergency appeals and components of inter-agency appeals.
UNICEF funding requirements for 2013

In order to carry out its planned regional emergency support actions in 2013, UNICEF ROSA is requesting US$4,910,000 from donors. This includes US$4.28 million for preparedness and response activities in emergency-prone countries in the region that are not included in a separate chapter of *Humanitarian Action for Children* and may not benefit from inter-agency flash appeals to respond to small or medium-size emergencies. Also, US$630,000 will be needed to ensure minimum regional capacity for emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and cluster and programmatic support in WASH, nutrition, education and child protection.

Adequate funding will enable UNICEF ROSA to deliver on its full range of regional accountabilities, as defined under UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional office</th>
<th>HAC 2013 requirements (US$)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional technical capacity</td>
<td>470,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional emergency and disaster risk reduction support activities</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency preparedness and response in emergency-prone countries in South Asia</td>
<td>4,280,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,910,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2 *2012 South Asia Data Pocketbook*, UNICEF