1. Critical Issues for Children

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia are amongst several countries in South East Europe facing the worst floods due to the heaviest rains seen in the region for more than a century. The map below provides an overview of the extent of the flooding in both countries.

Serbia

In Serbia, as of 20th May, an estimated 1.2 million people, including some 210,000 children, have been affected by the floods. Some 32,000 people have been evacuated from the affected areas, including 24,000 people from the municipality of Obrenovac, where the situation is the worst. Among those evacuated, some 6,000 are housed in 43 temporary accommodation facilities in Belgrade organized by the City of Belgrade and coordinated by the Serbian Red Cross (hotels, sports facilities, fair grounds and cultural centers), whereas the remainder are staying with relatives and friends. A large number of the families in collective centres are Roma, the majority of whom lost their home and belongings in the flooding.

Preliminary reports are indicating that at least twenty-two persons have lost their lives and the numbers of missing are still being compiled. The final numbers will be only known once water recedes. The floods are most severe in Western and Central Serbia, notably the districts of Kolubara, Macva, and Morava. Several of the larger towns in these districts have a significant number of Roma living in settlements. In Obrenovac alone, 20 Roma settlements are believed to have been completely washed away. The Sava River continues to rise, as well as the Danube and has resulted in further
Roads and other infrastructure have been seriously damaged by floods and landslides in many areas, with some areas still completely cut off. This poses a serious challenge for relief work. Social service infrastructure, such as health centres and schools, have also been severely affected by the floods, as of 20 May 150 schools in most affected areas in Serbia remain closed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the northern, eastern and central parts of the country have received heavy rainfall, with some areas receiving more than 250 liters of rain per square meter which is the highest in the last 120 years. This caused extreme water levels of rivers Bosna, Sava, Vrbas and their tributaries. Latest news reports estimate that this has caused more than 2,000 landslides across the country.

According to the country’s reports over 1 million people have been affected directly or indirectly by the floods requiring evacuation of 40,000 people. So far, 32 deaths have been reported. According to estimates close to 250,000 children might be affected by this disaster.

In the most affected locations both urban and rural areas are completely covered with water, cut off and without electricity or communication means. In the city of Banja Luka an estimate of 8,500 people are left without electricity. Cities of Doboj, Maglaj, Olovo, Bijelina, Tuzla, Zvornik, Samac are experiencing major flooding including in central city areas. Traffic is stopped or unable to move due to damages on numerous regional motorways and bridges, and currently around 30% of the country is impassable. The impact of floods in the capital, Sarajevo, is less severe.

UNICEF and its partners, including sister UN agencies and international and national non-governmental organisations, are working closely with the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to respond swiftly and effectively to the crisis. In order to respond quickly, UNICEF is requesting an initial US$ 3.6 million to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

2. UNICEF’S EMERGENCY RESPONSE

At present, UNICEF’s main objectives are to work with the governments and humanitarian partners to conduct further rapid multi-sectorial needs assessment and provide essential humanitarian assistance to those most affected by the disaster.

In Serbia, UNICEF, as a member of the UN Country Team, is taking the lead in child protection and education sectors as well as closely collaborating with UNFPA and WHO in health, nutrition and water and sanitation. In addition, UNICEF is coordinating all communication-related activities on behalf of the UNCT. UNICEF will also participate in the Post Disaster Needs Assessment expected to take place in the coming week.

UNICEF is closely coordinating its response activities in Belgrade with the Secretariat for Social Welfare of the City of Belgrade, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Defence, as well as university faculties and NGO partners. To date, UNICEF has mobilised over 120 volunteer psycho-social workers (mostly psychology students) and trained them, in collaboration with partners, over the weekend in order to be deployed to child-friendly spaces in collective centres on Monday 19 May. As part of their work, the psycho-social workers are conducting an initial situation and needs assessments in 20 collective centres, reaching an estimated 500 children. The child-friendly spaces will reach 30 centres with 35 teams by the end of the week. Recreation kits for 20 child-friendly spaces were delivered on Tuesday 20th May and are being used to deliver a full programme for children that includes workshops and activities in 2 shifts per day.

UNICEF has procured hygiene kits and blankets to cover the basic needs of 2,000 families and water pumps, which are being distributed through the national Red Cross and Ministry of Interior, respectively. In addition, a joint statement from

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1 These are estimates as exact numbers are still unknown to the authorities. Being the most affected part of the country currently unreachable UNICEF collected information through partners and official communication channels. It is expected that a more accurate number will be issued in the days to come.
UNICEF and WHO was issued on breast-feeding, highlighting that it is the safest source of food for children under two in emergencies.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF as a member of the UN country team, is taking the lead in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection and education (jointly with Save the Children) sectors in cooperation with the Resident Coordinator’s office and other international organizations. The UNCT submitted a joint proposal to UNOCHA of US$ 3 million. In close coordination with the Ministry of Security, Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the international organisations are currently working on needs assessment and delivering relief supplies to the most severely affected areas. On 22 May, teams of UN agencies, partners and donors are planning joint visit to affected areas and will develop detailed needs assessment.

UNICEF has procured locally 300 hygiene kits and distributed more than a ton of chlorine to decontaminate water supplies in affected areas. On 20 May, WHO and UNICEF met to develop communication material relating to water, sanitation and hygiene in a flood context as fear of water contamination and related threats to public health rise. UNICEF will coordinate the UN joint communication in WASH area.

UNOCHA has already contributed in securing basic survival equipment delivered to Tuzla on the 19th of May.

3. UNICEF PLANNED ACTION IN BiH AND SERBIA

UNICEF is working closely with the relevant government counterparts and UNCT in emergency response to the flood emergency in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Based on the initial assessments, the below listed interventions have been identified to protect children from the consequences of the floods. These interventions will be revised as more information on the impact of the floods becomes available. In Serbia, UNICEF will also support Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) in the areas of education, child protection and water and sanitation provided to the Government through the UN System.

Health and Nutrition
- Provide emergency medical supplies to support restoration of essential health services and reestablishment of paediatric health units in severely affected areas;
- Support continuation and/or restoration of immunization programme focused on the prevention of polio importation through the procurement of OPV vaccines as needed;
- Promote and support optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices and support nutrition monitoring systems, including Communication for Development (C4D) initiatives and outreach services;
- Provision of Vitamin A supplementation for children as required.

Education
- Lead sector coordination in Serbia as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina (with Save the Children);
- Support refurbishing pre-schools and schools and clearing of unsafe debris and hazards for children
- Supply school kits and/or supplies to the affected pre-schools and schools to support early resumption of education activities in the affected areas;
- Support establishment of temporary learning spaces for children whose schools have been destroyed or damaged by the floods;
- Train teachers in resuming learning and recreational activities to help restore normalcy to the lives of affected children;
- Provide psycho social support to affected children and teachers.

Water and Sanitation
- Lead sector coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Co-lead sector coordination in Serbia (in collaboration with WHO)
- Distribute water purification tablets, jerry cans and water tanks for household water treatment;
- Restore safe water supply and appropriate sanitation facilities in schools and health facilities;
- Provide hygiene materials, including soap, buckets and educational materials containing hygiene messages in local languages through C4D initiatives;
- Procure and deliver disinfectant along with equipment related to WASH restoration

Child Protection
- Lead sector coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia to ensure coherence and avoid duplications in response;
- Distribute life-saving and critical relief supplies such as blankets, boots and plastic sheeting;
- Establish child friendly spaces in affected communities to ensure children have access to a safe environment during relief efforts
- Provide support in the identification and registration of unaccompanied, separated and/or missing children;
- Prevent and respond to violence against and abuse of children through advocacy and awareness-raising activities;
- Monitor any violation of girls and women’s rights
- Organize summer camps to facilitate reconstruction efforts for adults

4. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM MAY-SEPTEMBER 2014

In order to provide immediate rapid response, UNICEF is requesting an initial US$ 3.6 million to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia for the coming four months. The funding will allow UNICEF to reach some 250,000 children in Bosnia and Herzegovina and around 210,000 children in Serbia.

Table 1. Estimated funding requirements from May to September 2014*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>BiH (US$)</th>
<th>Serbia (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>Water and Environmental Sanitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
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<td>600,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Communication and Coordination</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,790,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,810,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*A detailed appeal will be forthcoming after assessment of needs

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia can be obtained from:

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