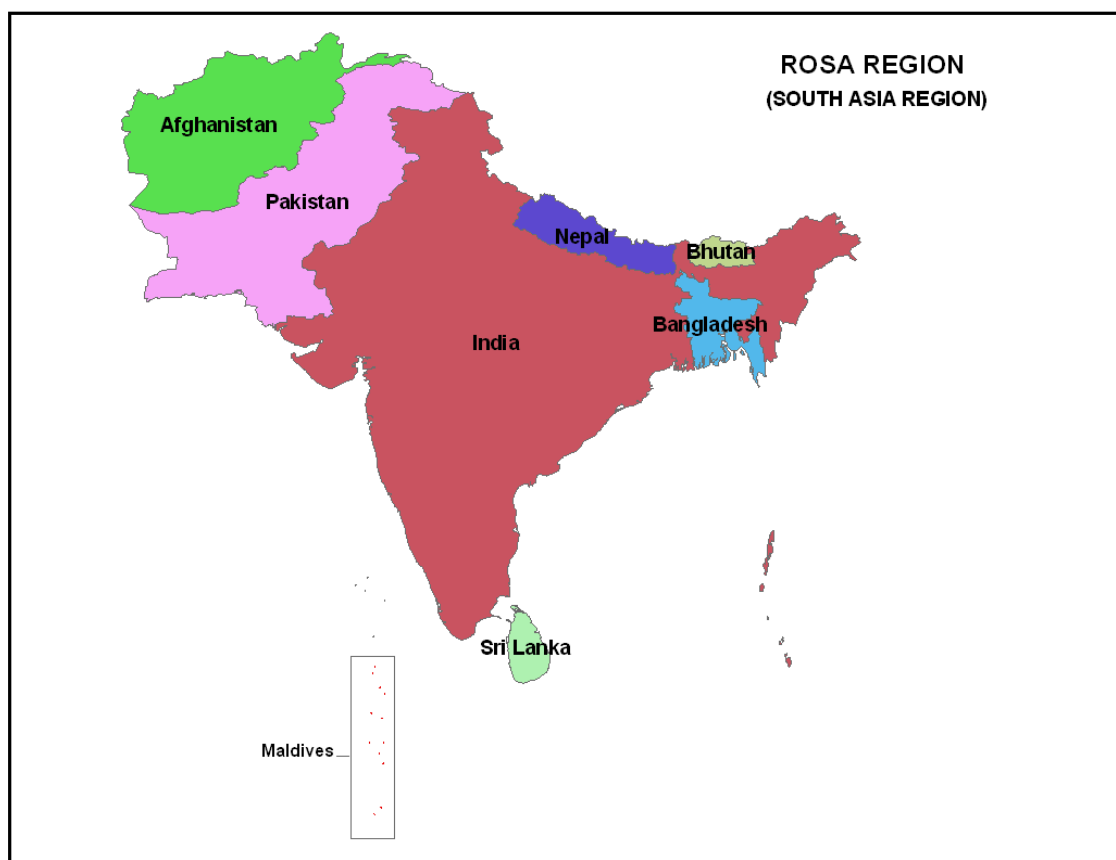


UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

SOUTH ASIA

IN 2007



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Regional Office financial needs for 2007	
Sector	US\$
Reinforcement of linkages leading from preparedness to early action at the country level	1,258,100
Human resources reinforcement: Regional Rapid Response Team (RRRT) and surge capacity at regional level	537,700
Total*	1,795,800

* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Despite South Asia's rapidly growing economies, governments' commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and each country's rights-based constitution and ambitious development plans, the MDGs remain unmet in most countries in the region. More children live in absolute poverty in South Asia than in any other region in the world. South Asia has by far the largest prevalence of underweight children under five. The level of child mortality is also one of the highest: one out of every three children who dies is from South Asia. While there has been progress in providing drinking water and sanitation, over 900 million people, many of them children, still live without access to improved sanitation facilities. The region also lags behind in primary school enrolment and completion, and is home to the greatest number of primary school-aged children who are out of school (42 million). The MDGs are about children's rights. Achieving the MDGs would enable the 584 million children living in South Asia to reach their full potential and become engaged, active, and productive members of society.

The children of South Asia also face a myriad of challenges that compound those relating to poverty and access to quality social services. Social exclusion due to gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, language, disability, and geographical location figures prominently in many children's lives and impedes their access to education and health services. Children also suffer systemic abuse of their rights through such practices as child labour, bonded labour, and trafficking.

Frequent and severe natural disasters and longstanding, pervasive armed conflicts affect children in many South Asian countries, robbing them of their childhood and, in many cases, their lives. South Asia contains some of the greatest population concentrations of urban and rural poor anywhere and is one of the most emergency-prone regions in the world. Natural disasters directly affect tens of millions of people perennially. All eight countries that comprise the South Asia region are affected. Six have major portions of territory in highly seismically active zones. Three countries in the region (India, Maldives and Sri Lanka) were severely affected by the December 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake through the tsunami that it triggered. Bangladesh, India, parts of Nepal and Pakistan are regularly affected by monsoon floods. Afghanistan, with all its other challenges, is now contending with a major drought emergency. India has a history of major drought-affected areas. More than 38,000 people were killed in Sri Lanka, and the tsunami affected 80 per cent of the Maldivian population. As always, children were among the first casualties of this devastating disaster. India and Pakistan were severely affected by the 8 October 2005 earthquake. As with the December 2004 Tsunami, the scale of the emergency in the impacted areas was unprecedented. In Pakistan, where half of the earthquake victims were children, the death toll reached 73,338 with another 69,400 seriously injured and more than 3.3 million left homeless.

As noted above, in addition to natural disasters, most countries in the region continue to experience political crises and civil strife, posing severe challenges for human rights, the rights of children and child protection. In 2006, of greatest concern in this respect were the rash of bombing incidents in India, the escalation of internal conflicts in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, uncertain prospects for an end to Nepal's ten-year insurgency, and continuing socio-political conflict in Bangladesh.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

Coordination and partnership

The emergency programme support of the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) to the eight UNICEF Country Offices in the South Asia region was made largely possible through the contribution of donors in the form of financial support for UNICEF's Global Thematic Humanitarian Response facility, funding received from the Government of Australia under the AusAID International Refugee Fund facility as well as regional allocations made possible through contributions to UNICEF from the Government of Japan, the United Kingdom Department for International Development

(DfID), and the European Commission Office of Humanitarian Aid (ECHO). UNICEF ROSA also collaborated on a range of inter-agency emergency preparedness support measures at the country level with other United Nations regional offices, notably those of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (based in Bangkok) and of the World Health Organization (based in New Delhi). In association with Mercy Corps and Conflicts Dynamics International, 'Advanced Training in Humanitarian Negotiations with Non-State Armed Groups' was conducted for 89 UNICEF and humanitarian partner staff in Nepal and in Sri Lanka. UNICEF ROSA has also opened up to UNICEF staff in the region training courses offered through the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) in Bangkok.

Actions and achievements

In the first half of 2006, emergency preparedness and response (EPR) training was made available to 166 UNICEF staff members and 46 humanitarian partner staff across four countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka). EPR planning update support missions were undertaken in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. In addition, UNICEF ROSA supported the organization of a briefing session for all South Asia region Country Office Senior Programme Officers on the cluster leadership approach and related coordination responsibilities with partners; the piloting of data collection tools (pilot multisectoral rapid assessment matrix tested in Sri Lanka); the training of UNICEF country office staff in INEE (Inter-Agency Network on Education in Emergencies) standards through the field testing in Sri Lanka of a pilot toolkit on education in emergencies.

As a result of this support and earlier activities conducted in 2005, most of the eight Country Offices have developed an updated emergency preparedness response programme (EPRP) and all of them have prepared a specific EPRP for the risk of Avian/Human Influenza (AHI). Nonetheless, experience has shown that these plans are not always fully operational upon the onset of a crisis. Simulation SWOT (strength weaknesses, opportunities and threats) exercises around specific hazards (drought, floods, earthquake, civil disorder) is a strategy for challenging the operational aspects of the preparedness plans. SWOTs in ROSA commenced in selected Country Offices in late 2006. However, the funding available for this is limited and will expire by the end of the first quarter of 2007.

All eight South Asia region UNICEF Country Offices, as well as UNICEF ROSA, participate in the early warning/early action system coordinated through the EMOPS Preparedness Support Unit in Geneva.

Beginning in mid-2005 and continuing into 2006, ROSA has actively supported, both technically and financially, the decision of the Global Consortium for Tsunami-Affected Countries to adapt DevInfo (the common UN-system tool used for monitoring progress on the MDGs) to include, among several design innovations, an emergency monitoring and reporting component. The result – DevInfo version 5.0 – has been again endorsed as a common UN system tool and, within the South Asia region, is being field tested in 2006, in India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The pre-positioning of emergency contingency supplies and the training in a new emergency supply management and logistics system (UNITRACK) have been supported through UNICEF ROSA and are integral elements of the strategy to strengthen South Asia region UNICEF Country Office emergency response operational capacities. An allocation from an AusAID grant received in July 2006 was channelled directly to the concerned project focus Country Office (for Bangladesh) for the procurement and pre-positioning of emergency supplies in most risky areas. UNITRACK training was pursued in the second half of 2006 in specific countries under Phase II of the ECHO-funded Emergency Preparedness Project.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2007

Coordination and partnership

Continue the collaborative and partnership arrangements established with the Regional Offices of other UN agencies, in particular with OCHA Regional Office in Bangkok for preparedness, with WFP Regional Office in Bangkok for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding for nutrition interventions in emergencies, with WHO Regional Office in Delhi and with the UN System for Influenza Coordination (UNSIC) in Bangkok for Avian/Human Influenza preparedness. Collaboration with academic and training institutes in South Asia will be explored with a view to the longer-term goal of establishing a partnership network with South Asian disaster management institutes based in the region.

Planned activities

In 2007 ROSA will continue to focus on improving the operationalization of South Asia region UNICEF Country Office contingency plans. This will be achieved following two strategic axes: i) reinforcement of linkages leading from preparedness to early action at the country level; ii) reinforcement of UNICEF ROSA's human resources base so as to establish a comprehensive rapid response team and a surge capacity commensurate with: a) UNICEF's global cluster approach leadership roles in coordination and in partnership with other humanitarian actors; b) ROSA's technical support, guidance and oversight accountabilities as required in UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs).

Expected results

- UNICEF offices based in high-risk countries can provide upon the onset of a crisis an immediate, efficient, effective and sustainable response for a pre-established, minimum number of beneficiaries in the first days of an emergency. This minimum number of beneficiaries and their assistance and protection requirements will be determined during the pre-crisis onset contingency planning process and will take into account the contingency plans and partnerships of other UN agencies and NGOs.
- With the onset of an emergency, Regional Office emergency staff are deployed within 48-72 hours to support the affected Country Office in the management of the crisis including coordination with partners. The profile of staff to be deployed will be chosen based on Country Office needs in discharging accountabilities under UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs) as well as where UNICEF will be called upon to play a leading role within the framework of the cluster leadership approach.

Strategy 1: Reinforcement of linkages leading from preparedness to early action at the country level (US\$ 1,258,100)

The goal is to ensure that minimal levels of readiness are in place. Rapid assessment training, humanitarian needs analysis, sectoral action plans, supply and human resources assessment needs, resource mobilization plan development, and inter-agency coordination and support are all requisite components. ROSA's support to the Country Offices will include:

- Improvement of tools and practices for the formulation of updated generic preparedness plans and for specific hazard-based contingency planning at the country level;
- Direct field support from the ROSA Emergency Team to initiate the contingency planning process for Country Offices facing an imminent crisis;
- Special simulation exercises as well as specialized training opportunities to strengthen staff programmatic and operations capacities with respect to scenario-specific emergencies;
- While providing direct technical assistance with respect to supply management and logistics requirements, mobilization of resources for Country Office-managed purchases and pre-positioning of emergency contingency supplies.

The use of newly developed monitoring and evaluation tools for the implementation of emergency response activities (notably DevInfo version 5.0 and UNITRACK) will be extended within South Asia region Country Offices. UNICEF ROSA will look to the UNICEF Headquarters' Evaluation Office for developments with respect to other emergency-context adaptations of programming monitoring and evaluation tools (e.g., performance monitoring of CCC implementation). At the same time, the results of the field-testing in Sri Lanka of the pilot multisectoral rapid assessment matrix should result in a final version of this tool that can be applied within the region.

UNITRACK training will be extended to include all Country Offices in the region. In addition, emergency contingency supplies will be pre-positioned as determined by the contingency plan minimum standing response readiness levels and on the basis of fixed modalities and accountabilities for the regular replenishment of these supply stocks.

Activities

Contingency plans will be prepared by Country Offices with ROSA Emergency Team's direct support. Specific action plans for each programme sector, including related operations as well as monitoring and evaluation processes, will be developed to ensure that the necessary measures are taken for an initial response. During this same process, funding requirements will be quantified and funding mechanisms defined. At the same time, the need for scenario-specific simulation exercises (SWOT) will be determined along with additional specialized training needs (e.g., in rapid assessment methodology, community-based disaster management, emergency programme monitoring and evaluation) for staff holding major programme management, implementation and monitoring/evaluation responsibilities. (US\$ 129,000)

As part of this process, emergency contingency supplies for pre-positioning plus related supply management and logistics requirements will be identified and quantified. These supply requirements will be calculated on the basis of the minimum level of standing response readiness capacity that is necessary to allow for life-saving interventions during an initial emergency response phase. The volume of supplies required will vary by country in function of a minimum caseload as expressed in numbers of beneficiaries within an initial response time frame preceding the mobilization of additional resources as per funding mechanisms such as the United Nations Flash Appeal and the subsequent Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). (US\$ 1,129,100)

Strategy 2: Human resources reinforcement – establishment of a comprehensive Regional Rapid Response Team (RRRT) and surge capacity at the regional level (US\$ 537,700)

To be truly comprehensive, a regional and regionally-supported human resources response capacity must have the following components fully operational:

- *Regional emergency planning cluster:* only since 2006 has the Regional Emergency Planning Cluster Programme Assistant position been funded from the core budget. The two international professionals within the Cluster remain funded on extra-budgetary (i.e., non-core budget) funding sources that have a limited duration. Presently the Regional Emergency Assistant position is funded until the end of 2007, while funding for the Project Officer-Emergency position expires at the end of March 2007. Additional funding is required to maintain the requisite level of staff within the Emergency Planning Cluster.
- *Regional Office staffing in line with cluster leadership approach responsibilities:* within the Regional Office as a whole, the present staffing contingent does not mirror the full range of programme areas for which UNICEF must assume cluster approach leadership responsibilities. While regional staff capacities exist for the education, child protection, water and sanitation as well as common data services clusters, the Regional Office remains without a Regional Nutrition Adviser-Emergency. In a region with nearly half of the world's malnourished children, and with

the cluster leadership role in nutrition assigned to UNICEF in all emergencies, this shortfall in technical personnel must be addressed on a priority basis.

- *External surge capacity:* compared with UNICEF Headquarters' emergency roster and country-to-country deployment, the regional roster has had less application than initially expected. As a result of a December 2005 consultation between Headquarters and UNICEF ROSA human resources and emergency planning cluster staff, this roster of external personnel is being redesigned in regard to the level of information available for each candidate and to ensure that systematic technical screening and clearance is provided by Regional Advisers in their respective areas of expertise. This is very much a work-in-progress and one that periodically requires additional personnel to coordinate updating of the roster.

Activities

Establishing a comprehensive regional human resources base to respond in emergencies is an organizational priority. While recent regional support to major emergencies (December 2004 tsunami and October 2005 South Asia earthquake) has been timely and effective, it remains partial with respect to the full range of programme accountabilities for which UNICEF is now responsible. Establishing and maintaining this capacity will require the following support for which funding is sought under the present proposal:

- One Regional Nutrition Adviser-Emergency L-5 for one year (US\$ 268,800);
- One Project Officer-Emergency L-4 for one year (US\$ 215,100);
- Surge capacity-related mission costs for the Regional Rapid Response Team (US\$ 10,800);
- Personnel and other support costs required to conduct regular updates of the ROSA external surge capacity roster (US\$ 43,000).