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Children in the Horn of Africa are at risk of experiencing the impacts of one of the worst climate-induced emergencies of the past 40 years.

- Three consecutive dry seasons have led to severe water scarcity and drought across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Eritrea, killing livestock and crops, displacing populations, increasing the risk of disease and malnutrition, and pushing children and families to their limits.
- An estimated 5.6 million people are at risk of severe household water insecurity and nearly 5.7 million children are threatened by acute malnourishment, with more than 1.7 million at risk of severe acute malnutrition.

Key messages

UNICEF is appealing for **US$119.5 million** to provide lifesaving support to **20 million** high-risk people, half of them children, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Eritrea. This support includes nutrition, child protection, education, health, social protection, water, sanitation and hygiene services for a period of six months.

- Communities are taking extreme measures to survive, with thousands of children and families leaving their homes in search of water, food, and pasture.
- Children are at particular risk, as they get disconnected from both education and health services. This includes exposure to violence when fetching water or other resources.
- Displacement of families will immediately drive children out of school, with heightened risks of permanent school dropout and a negative impact on their mental health, well-being and future.
- During drought, many families are forced to use children to secure their survival and get money for necessities (for example child marriage ‘drought brides’).
- There is a serious risk of higher rates of gender-based violence (GBV), temporary and permanent school dropout, family separation, and overall economic deterioration increasing child poverty.
UNICEF and partners are present in the four affected countries and working to support children with lifesaving services.

- UNICEF is the leading UN agency in providing access to clean water and reliable sanitation, and to promote basic hygiene practices in rural and urban areas, including in emergency situations.
- We are uniquely positioned to address the water emergency through a nexus lens of immediate humanitarian help and longer-term development approach, to make communities more resilient for the next drought, that the climate change patterns are predicting for this region.
- While UNICEF is ramping up its lifesaving assistance with strategies for durable effects of the interventions, we are also making smart investments in the longer-term resilience of communities and their children, through climate-resilient water, sanitation, and hygiene programs.

Climate emergencies can and must be averted with more investment in resilience systems.

- Providing lifesaving emergency assistance is imperative but not sufficient. With recurrent, cyclical and more severe climate events coupled with existing vulnerabilities, families and communities are struggling to recover between shocks.
- Continued investment in resilience system strengthening is essential to help communities prepare and be better able to handle increasing climate-related emergencies.
- UNICEF has already made significant progress, including building climate resilient water supplies, horizontal expansion of national social protection systems, enhanced capacities for local authorities to provide health and nutrition services, safe access to inclusive services and systems for displaced children and support to community-based protection mechanisms to prevent violence and exploitation for uprooted children.

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**The time to act is now, if we do, we can avert a full-on humanitarian catastrophe. UNICEF requires an approximate US$ 119.5 million between January to June 2022 to respond to the urgent lifesaving needs.**

UNICEF is also asking for US$ 275 million in the long term (3 years) to scale-up resilient climate-smart in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia. Out of this, US$ 64.5 million will be required in the first year. UNICEF’s drought response is water-led and cross-sectoral and considers both the immediate needs and longer-term investment necessary to prevent further deterioration.
Regional drought situation and multiple threats for children

The Horn of Africa is currently facing the third consecutive below-average rainfall season since late 2020 due to La Niña conditions, which is aggravating the current water crisis and ongoing drought in four countries. Up to 20 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Eritrea will need water and food assistance through mid-2022 due to drought, insecurity, economic challenges, and conflict.

The recurring rainfall deficit has resulted in a severe hydrological drought and current projections don’t speak for a replenishment of water systems to happen anytime soon, which is causing 5.6 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia to suffer from severe household water insecurity. Data on the proportion of the 3.4 million drought-affected people in Eritrea who are living with household water insecurity is still to be confirmed. In all drought-affected zones, the prices of water sold by private vendors (water trucking and donkey carts) have increased up to 300 per cent.

Overview of the drought-affected zones

At least 2.8 million people in Kenya who are severely food insecure (including more than 800,000 children under the age of five)

Up to 4.1 million people in Somalia facing food insecurity due to drought by May 2022 (including 1 million children under the age of five)

An estimated 6.8 million people in Ethiopia in drought-impacted areas in Afar, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNP, Somali, and Oromia lowland regions will need urgent humanitarian assistance by mid-2022).
Conflicts in the drought countries weigh heavily on the affected populations and further worsen their conditions. The active conflict in northern Ethiopia, and the protracted crisis in Somalia are still causing significant population displacements and humanitarian access restrictions. The upcoming general/presidential elections in 2022 in Somalia and Kenya may create tensions that will accentuate difficulties in responding to the current drought. Finally, the concentration of groups from different locations and competition over scarce water resources has historically generated tensions and conflicts.

Macroeconomic situation is dire. The populations in the Horn of Africa were already experiencing extreme levels of poverty and vulnerability before the emergence of the drought. Their economies got a hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks; between 2019 and 2020, per capita growth fell by 4 per cent, on average, turning negative in Eritrea, Kenya and Somalia (see figure below). To survive, households are adopting coping strategies that have dangerous and often irreversible consequences for children, which range from reducing food intake and withdrawing children from school (to save money on school fees or send children to work) to selling off productive assets (livestock, household items or land) and migrating. In the short-term, cash transfers can help avoid these negative coping behaviours by enabling families to meet their basic needs, and keep their children alive and safe.
UNICEF’s Regional Response Strategy

Intersectoral Response Strategy

UNICEF is responding to the lifesaving needs of drought affected children and their families in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, with 6 months multi-sector lifesaving response plans that are featured in each countries’ 2022 humanitarian appeals.

Addressing household water insecurity is the core driver of the regional drought response in 2022. UNICEF will scale up its WASH assistance to most-at-risk water insecure households and their health care facilities and schools in collaboration with Health and Education programmes. Nutrition-sensitive WASH interventions are targeting severely food insecure areas and intersectoral WASH responses will help mitigate the outbreak of diseases, such as cholera (due to contaminated water) and skin diseases (due to lack of water for hygiene); and assist in reducing the risk of gender-based violence (GBV) by shortening the walking distance to water sources. The intersectoral activities will take into account the special needs of people living with disabilities and will be complemented by UNICEF’s social and behaviour change programmes to ensure that safe hygiene practices get promoted and that the allocation and rationing of water is being well communicated to the populations.

Basic services are delivered as an integrated core package of assistance. UNICEF is prioritizing an integrated WASH, health, nutrition, child protection, GBV in emergencies, and education response, supported by shock-responsive social protection, social and behavioural change communication and operational support interventions in drought-affected areas with a focus on providing lifesaving services to avert a famine. This will be achieved with a rapid scale-up of the UNICEF response, through the procurement at scale of lifesaving core pipeline supplies, an increase in partnerships and coverage, and the expansion of critical services in the most affected areas.

UNICEF prioritizes its response to women and children living in the most affected and hardest-to-reach areas. All country plans have expanded their coverage through partnerships with governments, international NGO partners, the private sector and civil society organisations to reach those in hard-to-reach locations. With an estimated 30 per cent increase of needs for therapeutic foods (RUTF) for small children, a particular focus is being made on the fast procurement and distribution among the families in greatest need. Ethiopia and Somalia have specific access strategies in place, and immediate funding is required to ensure the lifesaving food assistance to treat moderately and severely malnourished is being provided in time.

UNICEF’s support to children and their families includes both, immediate lifesaving sectoral interventions, and core resilience and systems strengthening programming over a multi-year duration. Past regional drought responses in the Horn of Africa have clearly shown the critical importance of scaling immediate lifesaving and resilience interventions at the same time to achieve sustainable humanitarian impacts and durable outcomes that restore self-sufficiency and human dignity. Resilient basic services delivered in, or close to the worst drought affected areas, have been particularly important to prevent non-reversible rural-to-urban migration, noting this is a documented long-term outcome from the last major drought in Somalia in 2017/18.
Child protection and GBV prevention, risk mitigation and response are principal cross-cutting components for all interventions based on local analysis. Evidence from the 2016/2017 drought in the Horn of Africa showed increased risks of GBV including sexual violence and early marriage and child protection risks like child labour and children dropping out of school to economically support their families. These are likely to occur during another prolonged drought. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is also at the core of all interventions notably through safe and accessible reporting, and assistance for survivors of SEA.

UNICEF applies a ‘Do no harm’ approach in its programmes, particularly to avoid the aggravation of already existing tensions at community level. All response programmes account for the multiplicity of underlying risks, particularly the risk that certain vulnerable or politically excluded groups can be marginalised from accessing assistance. These principles are important noting affected communities have been subject to multiple shocks and those in need are already displaced.

**Key Programme Response Priorities (six-month response)**

**Nutrition**

UNICEF is supporting the prioritized procurement and pre-positioning of therapeutic foods and essential medicines, as well as Vitamin A supplementation. UNICEF is the cluster lead for nutrition and provides coordination and leadership in the sector both at national and sub-national levels. To ensure timely response, UNICEF is supporting the governments and partners on early case identification through integrated outreach, mobile health and nutrition teams, that assist in community level and family malnutrition screenings. The efforts include that pregnant women and mothers of young children will be counseled and supported to adopt appropriate child feeding and childcare practices, including complementary feeding. UNICEF is also supporting interventions that benefit children in middle childhood and adolescents, through community and school-based packages including iron-folic acid supplementation, deworming, and nutrition education. To address the key drivers of malnutrition, efforts will also target multi-sectoral engagements and system strengthening activities at national and sub-national level.

**Children and women in need and targeted for interventions in three drought affected countries**
In a scenario of normal rains we expect a global acute malnutrition rate of 5.7m children, of which 1.7m children will suffer from severe acute malnutrition. In a worst case scenario of again failed rains in the period of March-May 2022, the number of children affected by wasting will go up from 5.7m to 6.9m, of which 2 million children will require lifesaving treatment to fight their severe acute malnutrition.

**WASH**

Priorities for the WASH response are driven by the provision of lifesaving water, measures and interventions for reducing the risks of diarrhoeal and skin diseases and a continuous effort for providing goods and services that will support affected communities beyond the six months response. The planned activities in the four countries consist of resuming water services of existing water sources and systems. The provision of new boreholes in strategic locations in Somalia and Ethiopia is key to ensure water availability and helps to reduce the ongoing very expensive water trucking. Hygiene promotion accompanying the targeted distribution of hygiene kits, water purification tablets, and jerrycans to the people displaced by the drought and the most at risk groups, is another key intervention to ensure clean water supply, including to health and education facilities.

**Health**

UNICEF is supporting preparedness and response activities to prevent, mitigate and timely respond to public health emergencies, such as waterborne disease outbreaks. Priority is given to the continued provision of lifesaving essential health services for affected communities through context-sensitive approaches. UNICEF will assist in strengthening national and sub-national capacities for health emergency preparedness and response through continuous needs assessment and implementation monitoring, as well as training and capacity building activities for health workers and managers.

**Child Protection and Gender Based Violence**

Child protection and GBV priorities support the development and expansion of GBV response services including case management and psycho-social support. Some of the activities will include: (i) GBV prevention and risk mitigation efforts, (ii) community awareness and enhance community-based mechanisms, (iii) provision of access to essential services through quality case management including access to mental health and psychosocial support (iv) protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) including through the setting up of community-based complaint mechanisms, access to assistance, and capacity building of staff and partners.
Education

UNICEF will support children’s continued access to inclusive quality education for children affected by the drought, including displaced children by providing teaching, learning and recreation materials in safe learning environments. In collaboration with WFP, UNICEF will provide school meals for drought affected children to improve their nutritional status and encourage continued school attendance. In addition, UNICEF will support and help strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Education in emergency preparedness and response.

Social Protection

UNICEF will contribute to government contingency funds (where relevant) to support the rapid expansion of national cash transfer responses to affected populations. Some of the activities will include: (i) provision of operational support to humanitarian cash transfer (HCT) programmes; (ii) support governments in coordinating Cash Working Groups; (iii) monitor cash administration and carry out post-distribution monitoring to identify key gaps.

Climate resilience and systems strengthening activities

This water and drought crisis risks becoming one of the worst climate-induced emergencies seen in the Horn of Africa, and UNICEF as lead agency in WASH is ramping up efforts in building climate resilience among affected communities while responding to their lifesaving needs.

Medium to long term WASH strategies in the region are implemented to work towards water security and safety for all, at all times of the year.

UNICEF will prioritize the building of climate resilience among affected communities, through targeted WASH interventions, including (i) strategic support to governments for design, financing, implementation and sustainable operation and maintenance of climate resilient water schemes, with service revenue for ensuring operation and maintenance; (ii) strengthening monitoring and early warning systems for timely information on climate and environmental risks and hazards; (iii) robust data-driven analysis for informed decision by all project stakeholders (primary and secondary stakeholders) (iv) risk assessment, prevention and risk reduction approaches.
Funding Requirements

Funding requirements are set out below for each of the four focus countries and the regional office to support a scaled lifesaving response over the next six months across the drought affected countries.

Lifescaving response

UNICEF is appealing for US$119.5 million to provide lifesaving support to 20 million high-risk people (of which 10 million children) in Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia over a six-month period. The drought appeals are part of the HAC Appeals of the respective countries, which are aligned with the interagency humanitarian response plans/flash appeals.

Funding requirements:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Eritrea</th>
<th>Ethiopia</th>
<th>Kenya</th>
<th>Somalia</th>
<th>ESARO</th>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>11,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>18,000,000</td>
<td>460,000</td>
<td>39,460,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
<td>9,951,419</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,951,419</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>5,300,000</td>
<td>6,900,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>17,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>3,900,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>3,900,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,500,000</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>6,400,000</td>
<td>820,000</td>
<td>2,410,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,530,000</td>
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<td>Emergency Technical Support***</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>11,600,000</td>
<td>39,400,000</td>
<td>22,720,000</td>
<td>45,061,419</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>119,481,419</td>
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* Used monthly average requirements calculated from the Sept 2021- Mar 2022 response plan  ** For coordination and technical assistance to the 4 countries.  ***Humanitarian Action Resilience and Peacebuilding section.

Climate resilient WASH

People targeted and funding requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th># of people to be reached</th>
<th>Funding requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>year 1</td>
<td>years 1-2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>660,000</td>
<td>2,800,000</td>
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Dire consequences of inaction

Should no action be taken now to assist the 5.6 million severely water insecure households and 5.7 million children at risk of high levels of malnutrition, we may be facing a famine in affected areas of the four countries.

The reduced availability and consumption of safe drinking water will increase the risk of waterborne diseases, including diarrhea, and further worsen the health status of already malnourished children, potentially affecting many more children and their families with diseases and malnourishment.

UNICEF is prepositioning RUTF for the treatment of SAM and is scaling up agreements with companies to provide for lifesaving water trucking, water treatment chemicals, hygiene kits and other urgently needed items.

UNICEF has ramped up trainings and services to prevent as much as possible child rights violations and build the capacity of partners and governments to mitigate and provide services for gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse of children and their families.

UNICEF and partners need increased funding to step up and sustain those most urgent measures up to the end of June 2022 to avert a child rights catastrophe in the Horn of Africa.
For every child
Whoever she is.
Wherever he lives.
Every child deserves a childhood.
A future.
A fair chance.
That’s why UNICEF is there.
For each and every child.
Working day in and day out.
In 190 countries and territories.
Reaching the hardest to reach.
The furthest from help.
The most left behind.
The most excluded.
It’s why we stay to the end.
And never give up.

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