

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **UNICEF Launches USD 1.4 Billion Appeal in Response to Most Extreme Crises**

**GENEVA, 7 March 2011** – UNICEF released the Humanitarian Action for Children Report (HAR) 2011 today, requesting \$1.4 billion in its annual appeal to donors to assist children and women caught in the throes of crises. This year's appeal highlights 32 countries and emphasizes the increasing importance of strengthening the resilience of communities.

"Investing in children and building the resilience of countries and communities living on the edge not only shortens their road to recovery, but also helps them to manage anticipated risks before a crisis strikes and to mitigate loss when it does," said UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director, Hilde Johnson.

The world witnessed overpowering humanitarian crises in 2010: flooding in Pakistan submerged one-fifth of the country; the earthquake in Haiti claimed over 200,000 lives and displaced millions; the parched earth and lack of food across the Sahel continues to threaten hundreds of thousands of children with severe acute malnutrition.

These emergencies claim the headlines, but there are many more lesser-reported crises affecting the lives of children and families.

Around the world, drought, famine, violent conflict, and long-term displacement are a reality for millions of people. These humanitarian crises have dire consequences for children, among them recruitment into armed forces, sexual violence, and the loss of basic services such as water, health and education.

The unprecedented scale of the disasters in Haiti and Pakistan in 2010 triggered an extraordinary global response from all humanitarian organizations and partners. Yet it also underscored the need to strengthen preparedness and risk reduction in the communities that are hit repeatedly by crisis. Granting vulnerable communities the skills to face and withstand risk is an increasingly important component of humanitarian action, and an area to which UNICEF is deeply committed.

In 2010, for example, UNICEF revised its Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action to uphold the rights of children and women in crises. Key changes to the agency's humanitarian policy now place a stronger emphasis on preparedness before the onset of a crisis, strengthening the link between humanitarian action and development, and highlighting the importance of disaster risk reduction.

UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children Report 2011 presents crises that require exceptional support. It shows where urgent action is imperative to save lives, to protect children against the worst forms of violence and abuse, and to ensure access to basic services, such as water and sanitation, health, nutrition and education.

"After a year of devastating natural disaster and human tragedy, it has never been more timely to strengthen the resilience of people and communities who are placed in harm's way again and again," said Johnson.

The 32 countries targeted in this appeal have been prioritized based on the scale of the crisis, the severity of its impact on children and women, the chronic or protracted nature of the crisis, and the potential to bring about life-saving and long lasting results.

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**About UNICEF**

*UNICEF is on the ground in over 150 countries and territories to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence. The world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries, UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education for all boys and girls, and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS. UNICEF is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. For more information about UNICEF and its work visit: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)*

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