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Afghan women and girls are facing a systematic rights crisis. Their exclusion from secondary education and the workforce - and the imposition of rules governing their daily lives - has significantly increased their protection risks. The impacts will be felt for generations to come.

The economic crisis is expected to continue, with 64 per cent of households unable to meet their basic needs. This is coupled with a historic third La Niña drought, harsh winters and other climate-related risks. Vulnerable populations will be pushed to the brink.

UNICEF will continue to prioritize life-saving activities in underserved areas with multifaceted needs. Interventions will focus on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, nutrition, education and child protection. The UNICEF response will include gender-based violence services and the use of cash-based assistance to respond to sudden-onset disasters, avert catastrophe and meet existing humanitarian needs.

US$1.7 billion is urgently needed to meet the humanitarian needs of 19 million people in Afghanistan.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

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- US$1.7 billion is urgently needed to meet the humanitarian needs of 19 million people in Afghanistan.

**KEY PLANNED TARGETS**

- **19 million** people accessing healthcare services through UNICEF-supported activities
- **3.9 million** children/caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- **875,000** children with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **9 million** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water
- **28.3 million** people
- **15.3 million** children

**IN NEED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
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**TO BE REACHED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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</tbody>
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**FUNDING REQUIREMENTS**

- **US$ 1.7 billion**

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

More than more than 64 per cent of people in Afghanistan cannot meet their basic needs due to cascading crises that have shifted from conflict to economic shock, drought and a gender crisis. By December 2022, per capita income in the country is expected to be one-third lower than in 2020. The situation for women and girls has deteriorated: restrictions have created barriers to accessing services, curtailed basic freedoms and deprived many women of income-earning opportunities. The ban on girls’ secondary education affects 1.1 million girls, creating significant learning and protection risks. This will impact generations to come.

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Historic levels of aid in 2022 largely averted catastrophe. Needs have increased, though, due to economic sanctions, climate-related disasters and the significant reduction in development assistance. Nearly 20 million people are projected to be in emergency levels of food insecurity. In 15 out of 34 provinces, severe wasting levels are above 3 per cent, with 875,000 children under age 5 requiring life-saving treatment for severe wasting. Without scaled-up multisectoral interventions, the possibility of famine cannot be excluded.

WASH needs will increase with a third consecutive La Niña likely on the horizon. Sixty-four per cent of surveyed households are affected by drought, with 79 percent reporting lack of water and 51 percent reporting no access to improved latrines. Outbreaks continue, among them an outbreak of diarrhoea that has sickened more than 2 million people.

While the health system has narrowly avoided collapse, 13.3 million people have no access to health care, largely due to the lack of infrastructure, coupled with high costs. Facilities remain understaffed and under resourced and many are consistently short of medicines and supplies. Approximately 8.7 million children need education support. Negative coping mechanisms are commonplace: 31 per cent of households report at least one child out of school, and 18 per cent report sending children to work. In fact, more than 1 million children are estimated to be working. Before August 2021, 9 out of 10 women were experiencing gender-based violence at some point in their lifetime; post-August 2021, support networks of shelters, legal mechanisms and medical treatment services have collapsed.

Afghanistan is ranked number 5 of the countries that are most climate at-risk worldwide, with a higher warming rate than the global average. Floods and other natural hazards affected more than 223,000 people in 2022 - double the five-year average.

The operating environment in Afghanistan remains highly complex. While physical access to people in need has largely improved, bureaucratic impediments, threats and intimidation of humanitarian workers and restrictions on female humanitarian workers have increased significantly, hindering the delivery of critical life-saving services. UNICEF continues to advocate for unimpeded and principled access to people in need.

STORY FROM THE FIELD

For Anar Gul, UNICEF-supported cash assistance means healthy food for her children, checkups at the local clinic and new school supplies for her daughter. “It is better to receive this assistance as cash,” says Anar Gul, “because if we’re given clothes, we may already have clothes to wear, but we might not have food to eat. Sometimes, we might be given food, but we have no shoes to walk in,” she says.

Read more about this story here

Anar Gul, in Daikundi Province, is seven months pregnant. She recently received cash assistance from UNICEF to help her meet her basic needs and access critical health services.
UNICEF will continue to scale up life-saving humanitarian services in Afghanistan to meet unprecedented and growing needs, while ensuring critical basic services do not collapse. Emergency response interventions to acute needs will be prioritized while investing in nexus programming where feasible, particularly in drought-affected areas to reduce outbreaks and malnutrition. UNICEF’s cluster leadership and extensive field presence through five zonal offices and eight outposts allows for a decentralized, targeted and rapid response. UNICEF will deliver a holistic, gender-sensitive, inclusive response to the most vulnerable people in all programme areas.

UNICEF will continue to scale up curative and preventive nutrition services countrywide, including community-based screening and infant and young child feeding counselling. UNICEF will invest in multisectoral cash-based interventions in areas with the highest levels of severe wasting and at risk for Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5, as well as cash assistance to families of children requiring inpatient treatment for severe wasting. Primary and secondary health-care services will be prioritized, including maintaining critical human resources, medical supplies and equipment. To respond in hard-to-reach and underserved areas, UNICEF will operate more than 200 mobile health and nutrition teams that also integrate psychosocial support services. UNICEF will expand cash-based programming to offset prohibitive costs in accessing life-saving services.

UNICEF will scale up WASH programming. This includes prioritizing drought-responsive water supply to improve resilience in an effort to prevent displacement and reduce malnutrition burdens. UNICEF will undertake WASH interventions in both rural and urban settings through monitoring ground water levels, repair/rehabilitation of existing systems. The goal is to address the growing needs, prevent water systems collapse and reduce disease outbreaks.

UNICEF will continue to advocate for the reopening of secondary schools for girls. UNICEF will also reach vulnerable and shock-affected children through community-based education and both accelerated and temporary learning centres. The most at-risk public schools will be provided with critical support through school environment improvements, basic supplies and teacher training, particularly for female teachers.

To respond to growing protection needs, UNICEF will continue to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to vulnerable children, case management for unaccompanied and separated children, gender-based violence prevention, risk mitigation and response as well as targeted strengthening of the social workforce to improve the quality of care services. UNICEF will also expand work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse to ensure functional safe and accessible reporting mechanisms are in place.

UNICEF will continue to scale up the use of humanitarian cash transfers to respond rapidly to sudden-onset disasters, mitigate the impact of harsh winters and support access to life-saving services. Targeted cash-based social assistance will be used to reduce vulnerabilities that lead to negative coping strategies in high-risk areas. Outbreak preparedness and response, including the prepositioning of critical supplies, will be prioritized to ensure an integrated response.

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.
UNICEF is requesting US$1.7 billion for 2023 to meet the critical humanitarian needs of 19 million people in Afghanistan, including 10.3 million children. With needs increasing in all UNICEF programme areas of intervention, it is crucial to provide this support to alleviate acute suffering and preventable deaths. While needs are high and growing, funding requirements are reduced from the 2022 requirement of US$2 billion due to better costing methodologies, alternative response strategies and implementation measures adopted by UNICEF. The 2023 funding requirement takes into account global inflation, household purchasing power, global and regional shocks and such context-specific factors as the requirement that female humanitarian workers be accompanied by a Maharam (male family member).

Funding support will help 9 million people gain access to safe water, provide more than 800,000 people with life-saving support during harsh winters and enable 600,000 children to attend community-based education classes. Funding will also enable UNICEF to respond to sudden-onset disasters in a rapid and dignified manner and provide targeted multisectoral support to areas that are high risk for famine. Without sufficient, flexible and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response to the country’s continuing crises, including climate-related emergencies. Children in Afghanistan will continue to live in a steady state of threats to their rights without the continuation of critical life-saving funding and the principled humanitarian response it enables.

This 2023 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal is aligned with the 2023 Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan and other inter-agency planning documents. It prioritizes the most vulnerable children and families with multisectoral support to maintain access to life-saving services, reduce morbidity and enable children to access education and protective services.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2023 requirements (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>502,063,795</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>185,999,936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child protection, GBViE and PSEA</td>
<td>92,127,558</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>254,745,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>375,724,564</td>
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<td>Social protection</td>
<td>42,330,155</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)</td>
<td>31,450,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency preparedness and response</td>
<td>167,693,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,652,134,593</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions: Child protection, GBViE and PSEA (5.6%), Social protection (2.6%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (1.9%).
1. COVID-19 remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern as declared by the World Health Organization in January 2020. On 1 July 2022, UNICEF deactivated its Level 3 Sustained Phase for the global COVID-19 pandemic response. All activities related to COVID-19 pandemic response, including programme targets and funding requirements, have been shifted into regular development programming and operations. While UNICEF’s Level 3 emergency response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic was deactivated, the organization is continuing to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on children, their families and their communities and on the social systems they rely on.

2. UNICEF activated its Corporate Emergency Level 3 Scale-up Procedure for Afghanistan for the following period: 8 September 2021 to 31 December 2022. UNICEF Emergency Procedures are activated to ensure a timely and effective response to all crises. The emergency procedures provide a tailored package of mandatory actions and simplifications required for all offices responding to Level 3, Level 2 and Level 1 humanitarian situations.


4. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized.

5. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.

6. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized. According to the draft 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview, children represent 54 per cent of the population.

7. Overall targets are calculated based on people accessing primary and secondary health-care services, both fixed and mobile facilities, to avoid duplication with other sectors. This includes 10,276,703 children (4,948,042 girls and 5,328,661 boys), 4,377,114 women and 1,503,444 people with disabilities, including 811,860 children with disabilities.

8. Provisional number. This will be updated when the 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview for Afghanistan is finalized. According to the draft 2023 Humanitarian Needs Overview, children represent 54 per cent of the population.


12. SMART surveys, 2022.

13. World Health Organization (WHO), Afghanistan: Infectious disease outbreaks situation report - Epidemiological week 39, no. 60 (25 September - 1 October), WHO.


15. Ibid.


20. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster coordination for the WASH, Nutrition and Education Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. All cluster coordinators costs are included in sectoral programme budgets.

21. This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

22. UNICEF is committed to empowering local responders in humanitarian crises in a variety of ways. The revised Core Commitments made investing in strengthening the capacities of local actors in the humanitarian response a mandatory benchmark for UNICEF action. A more localized response will improve humanitarian action and is fundamental to achieving better accountability to affected populations.

23. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 5 is characterized as occurring when households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs, even after full employment of coping strategies. See: <www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/IPC_Famine_Factsheet_2020Nov.pdf>.

24. The target has decreased as a priority in 2023 compared with 2022 and will focus on routine immunization and any localized outbreaks that occur.

25. Health-care services consist of both primary and secondary health care.

26. The WASH targets have been lowered in 2023 compared with 2022 due to an expected increase in partner capacity within the WASH Cluster, and also because of challenges within the operating environment that impact delivering at scale.

27. This line item includes costs for cluster coordination, winter cash assistance, emergency stocks and rapid response.