Reporting Period: 28 February to 6 March 2023

Highlights

- According to the Ministry of Education, 2,513 schools (36 per cent of all schools that were functioning) in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib have been damaged. Of these, 1,836 lightly damaged schools have reopened. Attendance rates, however, remain low. A total of 129 schools are currently being used as shelters – a reduction from 171 the previous week.

- UNICEF provided education supplies and recreational kits for distribution to schools and shelters, covering the immediate needs of approximately 65,000 children in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia. Debris removal, minor repairs and light rehabilitation started in 42 schools in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama and Homs while preparations are ongoing to rehabilitate more than 277 schools.

- UNICEF reached over 487,100 people with life-saving water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and supplies, completed restoration of water facilities in two schools used as shelters in Lattakia and completed five prefab WASH units, providing 18 single-sex toilets and 12 showers in the sports stadium in Lattakia city – one of the largest shelters, hosting around 2,000 people.

- Social and behaviour change health educators provided awareness raising sessions, including on cholera, for 59,485 parents and caregivers in collective shelters through community dialogues.

- UNICEF and partners reached 139,023 children with essential child protection services and supplies, including psychological first aid and recreational activities. A new protection tool, “protection necklace”, was developed in Aleppo as a means to prevent family separation.

- As of 6 March, 61,354 people (12,132 families) in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama have received emergency cash assistance.
Funding Overview and Partnerships

To respond to life-saving needs of earthquake-affected children in Syria, UNICEF is appealing for **US$172.7 million** to implement its Immediate Response Plan, which is part of the Inter-Agency Flash Appeal and will inform the upcoming revision of the 2023 Syria HAC.1

One month since the earthquake disaster, the immediate response plan is only 29 per cent funded, with **US$49.8 million** funds received. Of the total funds received, US$39.6 million are from UNICEF core resources, UNICEF National Committees, UNICEF country offices with structured private sector fundraising activities and UNICEF’s global giving online platform. The remaining US$10 million received are from public sector partners including the Government of Australia, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and US$1.3 million from the Government of Japan. An additional US$2.6 million from the Global Partnership for Education Accelerated Funding Grant is expected to be received shortly. Other public sector partners have also pledged additional support, including USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, the Government of Slovakia, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all private and public sector partners for their critical support to the earthquake response. Flexible and unearmarked contributions are requested to enable UNICEF to continue responding based on emerging needs of children, regardless of their location in Syria.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

According to local and government sources, about 6,000 people have reportedly been killed and more than 12,000 injured across Syria as a result of the multiple earthquakes that hit parts of Syria and Türkiye on 6 February.2 More than 8.8 million people, including 3.7 million children, have been affected and many are now in urgent need of water, shelter, food, and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance.3

The situation in the affected areas remains dire with hundreds of thousands still displaced, either in collective shelters/reception centres or in host communities. At least 50,000 families have been displaced in Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Lattakia, with Aleppo being the hardest-hit.4 Meanwhile, in northwest (NW) Syria, as of 4 March, the camp coordination and camp management cluster/sector reported that there are 77 reception and collective centres in NW Syria, 50 of which were newly established post-earthquakes. According to a preliminary analysis, 62 per cent of the new reception centres have inadequate services and will be prioritized for immediate response.5 Family separation and lack of shelter are putting children at greater risk of exploitation and abuse.

WASH:

The already fragile water and sanitation infrastructure was extensively affected by the earthquake, with reports of damage and collapse of water reservoirs, water towers, water stations, network of sanitation facilities. This had a significant impact on the cholera response operations, affecting overall access to services, reduced partner capacity, diverted already limited funds available, and not least, negatively affected the mental health of the workforce.

Initial assessments by partners in earthquake affected areas in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Tartous and parts of southern Idlib indicate restoration of WASH sector status to pre-earthquake levels will require an estimated US$75 to 80 million. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, the impact of the earthquake has resulted in an additional service delivery requirement in new locations, estimated to increase the existing target of 1.1 million people by 500,000 with an emphasis on WASH provision at community level, bringing the population in need of WASH services to 1.6 million.

Health:

At least 116 health facilities reported damages (including at least seven hospitals) in Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia and Tartous.6 In NW Syria, at least 55 health facilities have been damaged with 15 health facilities having been suspended.7

According to the WHO, between 25 August 2022 and 15 February 2023, 92,649 suspected cholera cases have been reported from all 14 governorates, including 8,042 new suspected cases in the past month. The most affected governorates, Idlib (27,863 cases) and Aleppo (22,123 cases) were also severely affected by the earthquakes.8 There are also reports of an increasing number of acute watery diarrhoea cases within shelters in the affected governorates, while the health cluster/sector expects the attack rate of cholera to double in NW Syria over the coming weeks.

Nutrition:

The earthquake has impacted 3.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women and may exacerbate the nutrition situation of vulnerable children and women that was already alarming. So far, nutrition surveillance following the earthquake has shown positive signs, with no increase in acute malnutrition among children and pregnant and lactating

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1 Prior to the earthquake, UNICEF appealed for US$328.5 million for its 2023 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), which includes response activities for NW Syria. The severity of humanitarian needs in Syria was further exacerbated by the earthquake, especially since people across the country were already suffering from a deteriorating socio-economic condition, a recent cholera outbreak, shortages of electricity, water and fuel and 12 years of protracted crisis.
2 OCHA Syrian Arab Republic: Earthquakes, Whole of Syria situation updates, 1 March 2023
3 OCHA Syrian Arab Republic Situation Report #1: 25 February
4 Ibid
5 WHO Syria Earthquake Situation Report (15 February)
6 NW Syria Health Cluster 26 February
7 WHO, Whole of Syria, Cholera Outbreak Situation Report No.13
women. Nonetheless, a trend analysis from the Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022 has shown that the level of acute malnutrition among children and women is steadily rising in the country since 2019, whilst stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and uptake of infant and young child feeding, and care practices remain concerning.9

Education:
According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), 2,513 schools (36 per cent of all schools that were functioning) in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib have been damaged. Of these, 1,836 lightly damaged schools have reopened; however, attendance rates remain low, largely because parents are afraid to send their children due to aftershocks, condition of school or because of displacement.10 MoE and education partners report that a total of 129 schools (including 20 in NW Syria) are currently being used as shelters – a reduction from 171 the previous week as some families left shelters and authorities merged a few shelters together in order to free schools to resume education. Fear for children’s safety and continued tremors remain barriers however, prompting some caregivers to not send children back to school, even if schools are being re-opened.

Child Protection:
A rapid protection assessment noted elevated levels of distress among the affected population. Many children exhibit signs of anxiety, panic attacks, sleep disorders, depression and symptoms of post-earthquake dizziness syndrome. Many children with disabilities also lack disability accessible WASH facilities in collective shelters. Overcrowding is the most common issue in the collective shelters where many families are living in the same space without privacy and with concerns for their safety, including gender-based violence risks. Some children were also observed to be taking part in removing rubble to earn an income – exposing them to serious danger, including possible presence of unexploded ordnance.11 Inadequate funding has slowed response and scale up efforts to address more child protection needs.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response
UNICEF’s earthquake Immediate Response Plan aims to reach 5.4 million people, including 2.6 million children, in the first three-month period of the response (February to May 2023). UNICEF addresses the immediate life-saving and urgent humanitarian needs of girls, boys, adolescents, and families through an integrated and gender-responsive approach prioritizing highly affected areas and areas of large displacement. UNICEF will leverage the established system for accountability to affected populations (AAP) and the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In line with UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children in humanitarian action, priority will be given to restoring essential health and WASH, psychosocial support, family separations, protection case management, provision of cash and winter items where possible.

WASH
UNICEF to date reached 606,610 people with life-saving WASH services and supplies since the beginning of the earthquake response, through water trucking, solid waste management, desludging of septic tanks as well as the provision of family hygiene kits, baby diapers, sanitary napkins, and jerry cans. This includes 133,870 displaced people in 157 collective shelters in Aleppo and Hama, as well as 472,740 affected people in 185 reception centres and 15 communities in NW Syria.

UNICEF continued monitoring the quality of drinking water in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama, and Lattakia together with local water authorities. This will continue until regular service can be resumed following repairs to the water networks.

UNICEF also completed the restoration of water facilities in two schools used as internally displaced persons (IDP) shelters in Lattakia and completed five prefab WASH units, providing 18 single-sex toilets and 12 showers in the sports stadium in Lattakia city – one of the largest shelters, hosting around 2,000 IDPs.

Moreover, social and behavioural change sessions for hygiene promotion, including handwashing with soap, through awareness raising and community engagement were delivered to 322,736 people in NW Syria. UNICEF and WASH cluster partners continue to move ahead with the cholera mitigation response in collaboration with the health cluster.

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Water Resources to undertake a comprehensive assessment to assess operational efficiencies of earthquake affected water systems using a developed numerical model. This information will be used to set priorities and monitor the impact of repair works on facilities.

Health
UNICEF and partners, including WHO, have reached 342,502 people (including in shelters) with lifesaving supplies and medical consultations through 28 UNICEF-supported health centres and 48 mobile health teams. This includes 272,349 people in Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia, Idlib, and Tartous, as well 48,502 people reached in NW Syria.

Vaccination coverage among children, which was already alarming pre-earthquake, remains a key concern. A total of 4,518 children were vaccinated with routine immunization while 886 women were vaccinated with tetanus and diphtheria vaccine in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Idlib and Lattakia. In addition, UNICEF is working with local partners and youth volunteers and engage communities to ensure coverage of all children with vaccination, particularly in light of the country’s large number of over 150,000 ‘zero dose children’.12

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9 Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022
10 Ministry of Education data
11 OCHA Syrian Arab Republic Situation Report #1 25 February
12 As per 2022 Ministry of Health data, the number of unimmunized children in Syria is 152,515
Nutrition
UNICEF and partners supported over 196,129 under-five children and pregnant and lactating women with nutrition preventative and curative services, including screening for acute malnutrition, in earthquake affected areas, including 88,550 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Lattakia, and Tartous, as well as 107,579 children in NW Syria.
In Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Lattakia, and Tartous, 37,336 children were screened for acute malnutrition, out of which 268 moderately malnourished children and 83 severely malnourished children were detected and admitted for treatment. A total of 8,275 pregnant and lactating women were also screened for acute malnutrition, of which 544 were admitted for treatment. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, 547 pregnant and lactating women and 63,907 children were also screened for acute malnutrition, out of which 963 children were identified and admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition.
In collaboration with WFP, UNICEF and partners also reached 39,975 children and 2,180 pregnant and lactating women with micro-nutrient tablets and powder, including 29,949 under-five children and 4,414 pregnant and lactating women in Aleppo, Hama, Idlib, Lattakia, and Tartous, as well as 19,897 children and 5,269 pregnant and lactating women in NW Syria. In addition, UNICEF provided high-energy biscuits to 2,153 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous as well as 3,932 in NW Syria.
UNICEF and partners provided messages on appropriate infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies for 42,372 caregivers, including 51,214 caregivers in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous as well as 2,880 caregivers in NW Syria. UNICEF also initiated procurement of ready to use infant formulae (RUIF) which will be managed through the nutrition sector.

Education
During the reporting period, UNICEF significantly scaled up the coordination and implementation of rapid assessments of schools in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Tartous, and Lattakia. To date, a total of 2,292 schools have been assessed in these governorates. Debris removal, minor repairs and light rehabilitation started in 42 schools in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama, and Homs while preparations are ongoing to rehabilitate more than 277 schools. Preparations for school rehabilitation is closely coordinated with WASH sector to ensure that children can return to schools and resume their education in a safe environment with adequate gender and disability sensitive WASH facilities.
UNICEF provided education supplies and recreational kits for schools and shelters, covering the immediate needs of approximately 65,000 children (including 14,550 children in shelters) in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, and Hama. Additional supplies have been procured, including school kits, stationery, tents, prefabricated classrooms, school furniture and cleaning kits and materials aiming to serve the needs of over 255,000 students.
UNICEF also installed 11 temporary learning spaces in four collective shelters in Aleppo and started providing learning and recreational activities to over 440 children. UNICEF established eight digital learning centres (“Learning Cinemas”) in shelter locations in Aleppo and Lattakia and trained 53 facilitators and teachers on digital learning. Laptops and tablets pre-loaded with digital learning materials and interactive educational games along with projectors and batteries were provided to each centre; 2,040 children are expected to benefit from the learning cinemas.
In NW Syria, UNICEF and partners reached over 61,681 children to date, out of whom 48 per cent are girls, with non-formal education services along with life skills and citizenship education programs conducted within the formal and non-formal settings. In terms of geographical areas, UNICEF education supported activities covering districts and sub-districts in Aleppo and Idleb Governorates.

Child Protection
UNICEF and partners reached 139,023 children, including children with disabilities, and caregivers with psychological support, including psychological first aid, recreational activities, mental health psychosocial support and parenting sessions. This includes 80,124 displaced children and their families in 144 collective shelters who were reached through 21 mobile teams in Aleppo, Lattakia, and Hama as well as 58,899 children and caregivers in NW Syria.
UNICEF is also providing immediate case management support to trace and reunify children with their families or providing alternative care with extended families, including the referral of 90 children to specialized services. In Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia, UNICEF supported 163 children who were severely affected by the earthquake – of whom 73 are unaccompanied and separated children.
A new protection tool, “protection necklace”, was developed in Aleppo as a means to prevent family separation. The protection necklace has a QR code that includes the child’s full name, address, phone numbers of caregivers and relatives. A total of 800 children in one of the most affected areas will benefit from this intervention.
In NW Syria, a family tracing and reunification mechanism has been established which has so far registered 146 unaccompanied and separated children in NW Syria, all of which are currently provided with case management. UNICEF partners in NW Syria are also delivering emergency case funds as an immediate response to mitigate risk and vulnerability, reaching 183 children so far.
Meanwhile, in order to mitigate cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, especially in shelters, UNICEF, in coordination with UNHCR and child protection partners in Aleppo and Lattakia, have started sessions on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), reaching 1,259 children and adults. These numbers are expected to increase rapidly in the coming days to ensure that children and adults are aware of reporting mechanisms. At the same time, UNICEF is increasing the capacity of implementing partners on PSEA and is planning several trainings in the upcoming period.
UNICEF reached more than 16,000 of children and caregivers with key messages on how to deal with earthquakes and the aftermath. These messages focus on how to deal with fear, anger, death and also provide the children and caregivers with the needed information on how and where to access needed services, and how to prepare for possible new emergencies.

**Cash Relief Response**
UNICEF is using its two existing Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) programmes to respond to the emergency. These platforms have been built over the years to be shock responsive, thus allowing immediate response to affected populations: (i) the Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme (emergency winter response); and (ii) the Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities.

Through these platforms, unconditional cash assistance is provided to the most vulnerable families affected by the earthquake, including families caring for children with disabilities, orphans and children with chronic illness and female-headed families. In addition to cash, affected families with highly vulnerable children have started to benefit from case management and referral to social services. As of 6 March, 61,354 people (12,132 families) in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama have received emergency cash assistance.

Over the next 16 weeks, UNICEF will continue to provide emergency cash assistance with the aim to reach 200,000 vulnerable people (40,000 families) in earthquake-affected areas of Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia with two rounds of cash assistance. Meanwhile, UNICEF and partners in NW Syria are anticipating an expansion of the already existing cash programme by combining the current nutrition cash programme with a winterization top-up to reach 133,000 people. Cash assistance will be provided to families with children who have been affected by the earthquake, including displaced families residing in temporary shelters to meet their basic needs.

**Adolescents Development and Participation (ADAP)**
The engagement of young people helps expand the scope and reach of the humanitarian response while developing wellbeing, belonging and leadership skills of young people themselves. So far, UNICEF and partners have mobilized more than 1,000 youth volunteers to support the response actions across sectors in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia. This includes relief and shelter management, packaging, and distribution of food or non-food items (NFI) in collective shelters, as well as disseminating key messages. More than 100 youth volunteers were also trained and engaged in conducting rapid child protection assessments in 175 shelters in Aleppo during the reporting period.

In coordination with child protection interventions, 653 young volunteers in Aleppo participated in conducting recreational activities in collective shelters in addition to disseminating social and behaviour change (SBC) awareness messages through interactive theatre and storytelling. SBC messages about earthquake mitigation measures were disseminated in Lattakia through youth platforms and social media pages, reaching around 30,000 followers of those pages.

**Social and Behavioural Change / Risk Communication and Community Engagement**
SBC health educators provided awareness raising sessions, including on cholera, for IDPs in collective shelters for 59,485 parents and caregivers through community dialogues since the beginning of the response. Within the reporting period, UNICEF and partners reached a total of 7,705 people with lifesaving earthquake knowledge in 48 shelters and the most affected communities (non-shelters) in Aleppo, Hama, and Lattakia. A total of 426 community dialogues were conducted with beneficiaries along with the distribution of 1,909 flyers and posters. In addition, 46 edutainment sessions were conducted with 707 children and adolescents (367 girls and 340 boys). As part of cholera prevention efforts, UNICEF and partners conducted 382 door-to-door visits and sessions, focusing on water treatment and safety, along with hygiene and disease prevention practices. A total of 889 beneficiaries received cholera information, education and communication materials during the reporting period.

In NW Syria, UNICEF leads the risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) working group to include the earthquake response to the on-going cholera and COVID-19 response. UNICEF continues to engage and mobilize partners to disseminate life-saving information for the earthquake affected population, in particular in the areas of WASH, health and nutrition, education and child protection. Since the earthquake, partners in NW Syria have been mobilized to disseminate messages on cholera messages and other infectious diseases, as well as mental health support.

Within the framework of inter-agency coordination, partners continued to collaborate at different levels; key messages and risk communication about health issues, the earthquake in general, documenting the response and community engagement efforts at the sub-national level, as well as preparing assessments and behavioural insights to guide the monitoring and evaluation process.

**Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy**
UNICEF is scaling up its presence across the earthquake affected governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster/sector coordination for the WASH, nutrition and education clusters/sectors and the child protection area of responsibility.13

Currently, 61 staff with managerial, technical and senior cluster/sector coordination and information management capacity are being surged both into Damascus/field office locations and into Gaziantep. In addition, around 40 staff are

13 All cluster coordinators costs are included into sectoral programme budgets
providing support to earthquake affected areas through support missions. As part of this scale-up, UNICEF has also significantly increased capacity for cluster/sector coordination at national and sub-national levels across the whole of Syria, including additional international surge capacity for national and sub-national level education, nutrition and child protection cluster/sector coordination in UNICEF field offices in Aleppo, Lattakia, Homs and dedicated high-level cluster coordination for NW Syria.

UNICEF will ensure affected persons are reached through messaging on prevention and access to services, and existing complaints and feedback mechanisms (including sexual exploitation and abuse) will be scaled up with special attention to gender elements across all programmes and interventions.

As part of UNICEF’s accountability to affected populations (AAP), UNICEF is increasing the operating hours of its service line to accommodate the increased number of calls during the weekends. An agreement has been reached among sister UN Agencies on how to refer and manage cases to address the diverse needs of the affected population, in the areas, including but not limited to, shelter, NFI, health, gender-based violence, legal documentation, and reunification with families. At the same time, agencies have agreed to share their respective services in the affected areas so the callers can be immediately referred to and provide with necessary support.

In addition to the community engagement and social and behaviour change support mainstreamed across all programmes, UNICEF will lead the coordination across UN and non-UN organizations for a relevant response in this area. Furthermore, UNICEF will lead strategic activities catered to building resilience of children and their families affected by the earthquake and strengthening partners’ emergency preparedness as well as early recovery following the humanitarian programme cycle.

External Media
Interviews with regional and international media outlets continued, with highlights including UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell speaking to CNBC, Regional Director Adele Khodr’s interview with CGTN, and interviews with UBBC World, the New York Times, Arab News and more. Messaging continued to highlight the dire situation of the children, their immense needs and current challenges, and UNICEF’s response on the ground. Production and dissemination of a wide array of social media assets, videos and photos continued to mobilize private and international support to respond to the children’s immense needs.

Next SitRep: 17 March 2023

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### Annex A

#### Funding Status*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirements (USD)</th>
<th>Funds received USD</th>
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* As defined in UNICEF Immediate Response Plan for Syria (Earthquake), 16 February 2023, for a period of three months.