

## NIGER

Flash update # 04  
29 September 2023

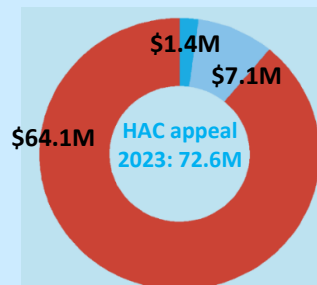
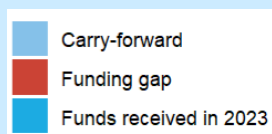


UNICEF assisted population affected by the crisis in Tahoua region. UNICEF is committed to provide life-saving activities for women and children in needs. @Islamane, 2023

### Humanitarian Update

- As of 25 September 2023, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Management (MAH/GC) has recorded 161,252 flood victims (19,135 households), with 51 deaths. The toll from these adverse weather conditions also includes the loss of 2,924 livestock, the collapse of 14,294 houses and 2 health care centres, and the flooding of 2,207 hectares of crops. The Maradi region is the most affected in terms of disaster victims, with 61,865 people, followed by Tillaberi (31,806 people), Tahoua (24,811 people), Zinder (22,068 people), Diffa (10,266), Agadez (6,176 people), Dosso (4,166 people), and Niamey (94 people).
- Niger is experiencing a diphtheria outbreak, with 865 reported cases and 37 fatalities, since the coup. These cases have been identified in Zinder and Tillaberi regions, as well as in the capital city of Niamey. Challenges to delivering a quality response include difficulty to access remote areas, a shortage of staff, and a particularly challenging security environment.
- Humanitarian partners express apprehension observing that as of 26 September, the Response Plan for Niger, valued at US\$ 584 million, and the US\$ 72.6 million UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal, have received only 40% and 11% respectively of their requisite funding.
- Presently, the nutrition sector has sufficient nutritional inputs to manage Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) until the end of the year. However, additional supplies are urgently required inside Niger to allow for pre-positioning for 2024, and there may be a need for buffer stocks in case of an unexpected surge of over 10,000 malnutrition cases in Q4 2023. This potential spike could be linked to the current epidemics, the lack of treatment for Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) cases, and the absence of food security input distributions to households in need during the remaining lean season.

### Funding Requirements



### Coordination, preparedness and response strategies

- Education Cluster activities were enhanced through several initiatives: (i) monthly meetings of the cluster and the thematic groups (Safe Schools, Literacy, and Non-formal Education); (ii) the involvement of 10 organizations aiming to raise awareness among 1,222,219 people regarding the safe return to school for 439,365 children (223,373 girls); (iii) the hosting of a national webinar on the International Day for the Protection of Education against Attacks with 111 participants (48 women); and (iv) training 48 participants (23 women), on gender-transformative approach and inclusion.
- Recent WASH cluster coordination meetings have identified sectoral shortfalls in Tillaberi region. They have also highlighted critical advocacy messages relayed by partners to OCHA and donors. Moreover, the three regional WASH working groups conducted their meetings, which were centered on scenario analysis and strategic targeting in light of potentially deteriorating conditions.
- As part of the emergency response preparation, draft plans for the regions of Diffa, Tahoua, and Maradi are currently available or under finalization. To improve effective monitoring of the evolving nutrition situation, the Nutrition in Emergency Working Group shifted its monthly meetings to a bi-monthly schedule to enhance coordination and ensure complementarity among the interventions of different partners. A primary goal is to consolidate information about nutritional supplies available at the national level, preparing for potential shortages should there be a prolonged border closure.
- UNICEF led the bi-monthly emergency nutrition partners' coordination meeting. The validated distribution and supply challenges were discussed in addition to the available nutrition data in the health information system (DHIS2) which can be found on the Nutrition Technical Group dashboard (<https://response.reliefweb.int/niger/nutrition>).

## Impact by Sector & UNICEF's Response



### Nutrition

- Approximately 72,000 severely wasted (SAM) children have been successfully treated in health centres since the onset of the crisis.
- Thanks to the contribution of the Ministry of Health in the preparation of the Q4 distribution plan, UNICEF will be able to deliver 74,988 cartons of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), therapeutic milk and essential medicines to the districts in the coming weeks; this will allow treatment of about 100,000 SAM children between October and December 2023. The remaining RUTF in UNICEF warehouse (6,903 cartons) in UNICEF stock will support a potential SAM increase of maximum 9,500 SAM cases.
- There are still major challenges on the supply chain. UNICEF has secured about 90% of the therapeutic supply for Q1 2024 with 63,336 cartons of RUTF and therapeutic milks. However, the majority of stock is still in Benin as a result of the continuing border closure, while a small portion will come from Burkina Faso in early November. UNICEF does not currently have funding for additional orders.
- These delays have created a pipeline break essential for World Food Programme support for food security and MAM. In addition to risks of epidemics and childhood disease, if this situation were to continue, it will exacerbate the therapeutic supply needs due to a projected increase in SAM children in Q4 2023. To mitigate this, the ongoing harvest may help to buffer this increase in MAM and SAM children. However, the RUTF supplies available in country will not be sufficient to address a sharp increase in SAM cases if MAM cases are not supported in a timely manner.
- Due to the ongoing political situation, it has been challenging to organize a national SMART nutritional survey in a timely manner. A possible solution to organize a quick SMART in March-April 2024 is being considered, in order to draw trend comparisons with the survey conducted at the same period in 2022.



### Health

- UNICEF supports health facilities in Niamey, notably in managing the malaria peak by providing severe malaria care kits for 300 children at the Niamey regional

hospital. UNICEF is also assessing the functioning of the Issaka Gazobi national maternity hospital, with emphasis on newborn care.

- UNICEF actively participates in health cluster meetings, coordinating humanitarian partner interventions and addressing the diphtheria situation. In Zinder, UNICEF assisted the Matameye health district to assess a diphtheria outbreak that began in September 2023, where, as of 23 September, 706 patients, including 171 children under 5 years, have been treated with a 2.6% fatality rate.
- In collaboration with GAVI, UNICEF is enhancing the quality of vaccination services, installing solar refrigerators at 354 new service points in hard-to-reach desert areas of Zinder, Maradi, and Tahoua. This has granted 161,023 children (0-11 months) and 193,083 additional pregnant women to access quality vaccination services.
- Newborn care equipment was delivered to four mother-child health centres (Agadez, Tahoua, Tillaberi, and Dosso) and two integrated health centres in the Dosso region. This will cater to 5,120 pregnant women and 8,097 children aged 0-5 years. Additionally, UNICEF staff supported the review of the Ministry of Health's action plans, discussing feasible interventions given the country's current context.



### Child Protection

- Since the crisis, UNICEF has scaled up its child protection response in emergencies, addressing notable inter-agency gaps. This effort encompasses the formation of new partnerships across various regions, delivering a comprehensive package of child protection interventions in line with the Core Commitments for Children. Such interventions cover mental health and psychosocial support, case management, gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse risk mitigation, as well as children and armed conflict (CAAC).
- In its endeavor to monitor grave violations against children, UNICEF has extended its training programmes to national NGOs, community structures, and other UN agencies. A capacity assessment matrix tailored for protection actors has been constructed and ratified for five distinct regions. This matrix serves as a guiding tool for subsequent training and communication initiatives.
- Amidst the context of psychosocial support operations, UNICEF is the sole child protection agency equipped with an emergency supply, thanks to its preparedness efforts. UNICEF has initiated the dissemination of crucial household items, projected to benefit over 15,000 individuals (9,000 of whom are girls) and parents affected by displacement, floods, and the prevailing political unrest, which also encompasses 1,065 recreational kits.

- However, due to restricted site access resulting from military operations, UNICEF has bolstered community capabilities to serve as primary protection actors. As a result, 101 new CVPEs (*comité villageois de protection de l'enfant*), comprising 1,212 members, have been empowered to detect, offer basic care, and refer 2,920 children (including 669 girls). Additionally, 32,321 individuals (16,730 adults and 15,591 children) have been reached with GBV mitigation endeavors and awareness of primary child protection risks. Nonetheless, significant challenges persist in child protection within this context, predominantly concerning the risk of recruitment by conflicting parties, detainment, and other severe child rights violations.
- UNICEF is re-evaluating its community engagement and behaviour change strategies in response to the crisis. The objective is to guarantee a sustained intervention process to prevent and address child marriage, specifically to identify and alleviate the heightened risks faced by girls in crisis settings. Presently, community-level consultations are in progress across various regions, aiming to shape UNICEF's tailored programming for the crisis response.



## Education

- During the reported period, UNICEF initiated a Standby Agreement to identify partners to ensure the continuity of the educational response in the four emergency regions (Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, and Tillabéri), aiming to benefit 48,000 children. Four partners have been chosen, and preparations are underway for the humanitarian partnership programme document, set to begin on October 1st for a span of three months.
- In anticipation of the back-to-school period, UNICEF collaborated to initiate the purchase of individual school kits for 170,552 children. Despite border closures and in-country restrictions, strategic planning facilitated a four-phase procurement process. The first batch is scheduled for delivery in October and will supplement the already prepositioned kits at the regional level. By the end of the procurement, 375,100 children will receive individual kits.



## Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

- UNICEF has entered into a partnership with NGOs DEDI, DEMIE, and VISION PLUS to deliver emergency WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) services. This

initiative aims to aid 2,746 additional individuals affected by floods and at risk of cholera in the regions of Tillabéri, Tahoua, Maradi, and Zinder. This includes 650 women and 1,445 children. This decision was based on the recommendations of L2.

- In collaboration with the NGO IDELA, UNICEF is promoting good hygiene and sanitation practices among approximately 688 residents of Gueskerou and Bosso municipalities. This initiative also provides support for the construction and utilization of household latrines, as well as the distribution of vital WASH supplies to an additional 169 vulnerable households.



Village assembly, promoted by Unicef for sanitation monitoring in the Gueskerou Commune, Diffa Region. UNICEF provides support to communities to end Open Defecation. @Kassoka, 2023.



## Social Protection

- UNICEF Niger continued preparatory activities to set up a strong internal coordination mechanism to ensure that all contracted service providers and implementation partners and relevant UNICEF staff are adequately connected, informed, and operationally linked to jointly deliver 12-month drought response cash assistance to 27,000 households in 336 villages and 18 municipalities in Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Dosso and Agadez regions. Particular focus is being placed on risk mitigation measures, as UNICEF will directly implement all delivery functions (targeting, data collection and registry, payments and monitoring, post-distribution monitoring and grievances).



## Social and Behaviour Change

- Ongoing Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) interventions are disseminating life-saving information through community workers and radios in the Diffa region, focusing on nutrition, protection, routine immunization, and



community-based support for underserved children, including those from displaced and refugee communities. Efforts are also in place for the prevention and response to cholera and diphtheria outbreaks in selected regions.

- Activities include flood management in various regions and community feedback mechanisms through community-based platforms to collect and address rumors, concerns, and complaints raised by community members.
- SBC is actively supporting upcoming initiatives such as a drought cash transfer and back-to-school campaign, with comprehensive planning and accountability mechanisms being developed to assist affected populations.
- A significant achievement is the exposure of over 4.4 million people (including approximately 2.1 million women) to life-saving messages delivered through community radios and interpersonal communication. These messages encompass vaccination, birth registration, education, social cohesion, nutrition, disease prevention, and support for unaccompanied children, including sexual abuse and exploitation prevention.



### Essential Household Items

- UNICEF continues to ensure the technical coordination of the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) in Niger.
- RRM actors remain committed to addressing the needs of displaced populations. During the month of September 2023, 11 alerts related to population displacement were reported in the areas of Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabéri.
- Since the beginning of September, RRM actors have conducted 17 assessments (MSA, ERP, and WASH) in the regions of Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabéri. The results of these assessments have been shared with the humanitarian community to facilitate tailored responses to the identified needs.
- A total of 1,808 households (comprising 12,023 individuals, including 8,645 children) displaced have received 1,808 NFI and WASH kits in the regions of Diffa and Tahoua since the beginning of September. These kits were made available to RRM actors by UNICEF.

## Reports from Field Offices

### Agadez region

- **Health, nutrition, WASH:** Through the NGOs French Red Cross and COMDEV, UNICEF has strengthened actions for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition and the promotion of vaccination in the region. The regional directorate and the 7 health districts of the region have been supplied with fuel to compensate for power outages due to the suspension of supply to the country by Nigeria. Five autonomous water stations and 10 latrine blocks for health centres funded by UNICEF have been received.
- **Education and child protection:** With UNICEF's support, the Agadez Education thematic group meeting has strengthened the coordination of partners and identified priority supports to make the school year effective, including for refugee children and asylum seekers. A multi-sectoral emergency programme will soon be rolled out, in partnership with UNHCR and the NGO Intersos, to ensure the education and protection of 600 refugee children and asylum seekers, 4,000 migrant children, and 1,000 unaccompanied and separated children.



Formative supervisory at the Integrated Health Centre of Missirata, Agadez region. UNICEF continues to ensure health care for vulnerable populations. @Soufiyane, 2023.

### Diffa region

- **Health:** The SETRAC research firm assessed the work done by companies for the renovation of health structures (14 CSI and 18 health huts). The report was amended by UNICEF, and will proceed to the next stage once the revised version is available.
- **WASH:** There has been a handover of sites for the construction of 6 boreholes equipped with hand pumps in the Gueskerou municipality.
- **Education:** The U-reporters carried out activities as part of the Back-to-School programme in 5 primary schools in the urban municipality of Diffa (sanitation, renovation of boards, benches, etc.).
- **SBC:** In the context of the networking of youth associations in the four municipalities of Diffa, Gueskerou, Chetimari,

and Maine Soroa for the promotion of social cohesion, a total of 80 networks have been established in 90 villages/neighborhoods, and their capacities have been strengthened on the theme.



Monitoring of sanitation at the department level in Gueskerou, Diffa Region. UNICEF supports the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS). @Kassoka, 2023.

Discussions were held about water governance with technical stakeholders, and support was provided for the accountability exercise to be organized by the town halls by the end of the year, bringing together all stakeholders and the community; (iii) Monitoring was conducted with stakeholders, and communal and village protection committees; and (iv) Monitoring the progress of the Wakilan Gari action plan implementation in Tabalak municipality as part of the ACPI.

### Maradi and Zinder regions

- Construction is currently underway for 40 community socio-recreational centres across 40 villages and 6 internally displaced persons (IDP) sites. In collaboration with the Mental Health Working Group and the establishment of mobile teams, UNICEF will offer extensive mental health and psychosocial support to a significant number of children residing in hard-to-reach rural areas.

### Tahoua region

- **WASH:** The flood response in the Tahoua region has started to benefit the affected populations. Vision Plus, the implementing partner for this project, has started its activities in the five identified departments in collaboration with the technical services. The initiated activities primarily involve raising awareness in communities about good WASH practices. 942 people (including 360 men; 232 women; 212 boys, and 138 girls) have gained awareness in 15 villages in the Illela and Malbaza departments.
- **Monitoring activities:** A mission to monitor multi-sectoral activities was conducted in 4 municipalities of Tahoua region: (i) 4 Integrated Health Centres (CSI) were visited (Guezza, Tourouf, Tabalak, Bagaroua) where the team assessed the functionality of the cold chain and vaccines, the temperature sheet, the existence of a curative community relay network, the availability of medicines, the stock availability and management of essential products, Vitamin A, and Albendazole; (ii) 3 nearby colleges and their autonomous water points were visited.