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Highlights

- The severe winter situation, Dzud, has continued to worsen across nation since the last situation report. Over 150,500 people, including 62,500 children (31,500 girls and 31,000 boys) are grappling with an exceptionally harsh winter characterized by icy conditions that completely obstruct livestock access to pastures and cause disruption to education, health, and social services.
- As of 20th February 2024, over 90% of the country has been affected by extreme Dzud conditions, with 160 soums across 20 provinces being identified as high-risk areas.
- To ensure a timely response to the severely affected areas, UNICEF Mongolia has allocated USD 173,000 in funding and USD 35,000 in pre-positioned supplies, providing immediate assistance to over 9,000 children. To address the most critical and time-sensitive needs caused by the escalating weather conditions, USD 600,000 out of the total USD 2,456,000 planned response is urgently required.

Date: 21 February 2024

Situation in Numbers

- ❖ Over 150,500 people including 62,500 children affected (31,500 girls; 31,000 boys).
- ❖ 90% of the country, 20 out of 21 provinces, impacted.
- ❖ USD 600,000 out of the USD 2,456,000 is urgently required to address the immediate needs of the affected population.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Mongolia is increasingly grappling with the impacts of climate change, manifested in discernible shifts in weather patterns that underscore the escalation of this global phenomenon. Though the summer of 2023 was initially favorable with abundant rainfall, the months that followed saw the abrupt onset of a severe temperature drop, substantial snowfall in early November, and an unusually rapid temperature rise causing a snow thaw. Subsequently, an extended period of extreme cold, dipping below -40°C , persisted through the second half of December 2023. These combined factors have made winter 2023-2024 particularly challenging for the country.¹ As a result, rural communities in the country are now grappling with an exceptionally harsh winter characterized by icy conditions that completely obstruct livestock access to pasture. The heavy snowfall has also closed roads and passes, hindering access to essential services such as health and education and disrupting supply chains for food, medicine, consumer goods, firewood, coal, hay, and animal feed. According to the national Emergency Operations Center (EOC), there are 13,573 households currently residing in snow blocked areas, as of 18 February 2024.

Between November 2023 to February 2024, severe blizzards and harsh weather conditions affected over 90% of the country. Over 150,500 people, including 62,500 children (31,500 girls and 31,000 boys) are affected by the extreme weather conditions. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) search and rescue teams have responded

¹ [Mongolia Dzud Early Action Response Plan 2023/2024](#)

to more than 89 alert calls for missing people, rescuing over 1,430 people trapped by heavy snow. According to EOC, 9 casualties due to snowstorms, including 1 child, have been reported.

The number of livestock perished reached 667,841 as of 19 February 2024, which is significantly higher compared to past years' data. However, the peak of livestock mortality is yet to come and expected to occur from late February to April 2024. The Government is supporting the commercial destocking of livestock to reduce the negative impact of the losses for herders.

According to the initial needs assessment conducted by UNICEF, support for accessibility to education and health services, material and capacity building support for local health centers, emergency responders and child protection rapid response teams have been identified as priorities by local authorities. Mental health and wellbeing support, nutrition and hygiene support have been identified as needed by children and parents interviewed.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is activated and working to collectively respond. The Dzud Early Action and Response Plan for 2023/2024 has been published on 19th of February 2024, to complement the Government of Mongolia's Dzud Anticipatory Action and Response Plan.

Immediate needs for mid-February to April 2024 include funding for road clearing, support for child protection workers, provision of health and hygiene kits, and distribution of learning tools for school children.

UNICEF Response

Health and Nutrition

Between 15 December 2023 to 20 February 2024, UNICEF Mongolia provided 120 Interagency Emergency Health Kits, containing basic medicines, medical devices, and supplies. Ready-to-use therapeutic food is being distributed to health departments in 17 provinces for the treatment of 400 children with acute malnutrition. The supported health centers provided mobile health service to 4,143 people in high-risk areas, including 664 children aged 6-59 months, 75 pregnant women and 123 people with disability. Red cross volunteers trained with support from UNICEF on Psychological first aid are being mobilized nationwide to support children in severely affected provinces.

100 additional emergency health kits, high dose vitamin A and multiple micronutrient powders for 5,000 children are being procured for immediate relief distribution to cover the support 100 local health centers. To further strengthen the preparedness capacity of the local health service providers, UNICEF Mongolia is preparing to train 1000 community health workers to provide essential MNCH services.

WASH

Between 15 December 2023 to 20 February 2024, UNICEF Mongolia distributed 455 hygiene kits to households with children and pregnant and lactating women who are on Otor Movement² in 11 soums of 7 provinces, and 20 hygiene kits to child protection shelters across 6 provinces. To further enhance disease prevention, UNICEF is coordinating the WASH cluster agencies to disseminate hygiene promotion messaging through various channels and media, targeting the entire population.

In preparedness to flashfloods which is predicted to occur post dzud condition (around April to May 2024), UNICEF Mongolia is working on pre-positioning 5000 family hygiene kits for relief distribution and training 120 local responders on WASH in emergencies in collaboration with NEMA.

Education

Portable digital audio devices pre-loaded with audio lessons have been delivered to 100 herder households with school-age children. Pre-positioned learning materials and school supplies are being distributed to dormitories of 4 provinces.

Child Protection

To ensure the integration of minimum standards on child protection in emergencies and adoption of child protection multi-disciplinary approach in dzud response, UNICEF Mongolia is organizing "Child Protection in Emergencies" cascaded training for 320 local responders. To address and prevent gender-based violence, UNICEF Mongolia is providing refresher capacity building support for child protection rapid response teams and community groups.

² The Otor Movement is a nomadic practice of domestic herders migrating to seek pasture.

Social Protection

UNICEF is advocating with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the State Emergency Commission to support affected households with non-conditional cash assistance intervention. The target vulnerable households are identified as households with less than 200 livestock who have children aged under five years, children living in dormitories in dzud risk areas, elderly citizens with underlying health conditions, and low-income households outside of the social protection system.

Social Behaviour Change (SBC) and Accountability to Affected Population (AAP)

UNICEF Mongolia is engaging with young volunteers and community health workers to support the locally led initiatives to promote well-being, safety, mental health and disaster risk reduction knowledge of school children and herder households. Advocacy contents regarding dzud impact on children's wellbeing and disruption to education and health system are being developed and disseminated through UNICEF Mongolia social media pages.

Cross-sector Support

To assess the dzud situation, UNICEF team led by the Representative conducted field mission in 5 severely affected provinces and held discussions with local authorities, responders, and school children to identify the needs and response gaps. One of the priority needs identified was the support for clearing of the roads and passes blocked by heavy snowfalls, hindering access to essential services such as health and education and disrupting supply chains. To assist the effort, UNICEF Mongolia is providing cash for fuel support to 67 soums of 6 provinces that are most severely affected. In preparation for upcoming severe blizzards expected in late February to mid-March, UNICEF is allocating additional funding for cash for fuel support to support effective response of local rescue teams.

Around 3,500 joint response packages including hygiene, sanitation and education kits are distributed to target groups identified in collaboration with Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Humanitarian Coordination and Partnership

The State Emergency Commission led by the Deputy Prime Minister is leading the Dzud response. UNICEF Mongolia is working in close coordination with Emergency Operations Center led by National Emergency Management Agency to timely and efficiently respond to dzud. UNICEF is also working closely with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Education and Science and Local emergency departments to collect required information, prioritize response activities and identify target groups. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) is activated and working closely to collectively respond. UNICEF is leading WASH, Nutrition, Education (co-led with Save the Children) and Protection (co-led with UNFPA) cluster agencies to deliver coordinated and effectively managed response nationwide without duplication of efforts. UNICEF Mongolia has also started advocacy activities with private sector to generate funding for dzud response.

Funding Requirements (February – April 2024)

To deliver timely response to the severely affected areas, UNICEF Mongolia has allocated USD 173,000 in funding and USD 35,000 in pre-positioned supplies. To accelerate the support and meet the most critical and time-sensitive needs, Mongolia Country Office urgently needs USD 600,000 out of the USD 2,456,000 total budget from mid-February till Apr 2024. UNICEF's response plan and funding requirements have been updated in line with the inter-agency Dzud Early Action and Response Plan for 2023/2024.

Budget update #1, as of 19 Feb 2024

Sector	Funding Needs (USD)
Health	260,000
Nutrition	386,000
WASH	1,200,000
Education	210,000
Child Protection	120,000
SBC and AAP	65,000
Cross Sector and Coordination	215,000
Total	2,456,000

UNICEF Mongolia Communications:

- <https://reliefweb.int/report/mongolia/mongolia-2024-dzud-early-action-response-plan-dec-2023-may-2024>
- <https://www.facebook.com/reel/440078301676941>
- <https://twitter.com/UNICEFRepMN/status/1745424933411500217>
- <https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/press-releases/unicef-urges-help-children-affected-severe-winter>
- <https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/node/2136>
- <https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/press-releases/unicef-urges-help-children-affected-severe-winter>
- <https://mongolia.un.org/en/215015-enhancing-social-protection-and-disaster-response-rural-mongolia>

UNICEF Mongolia social media pages:

- **UNICEF Mongolia Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/unicefmongolia>
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/UNICEFRepMN>

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