Response in coastal countries linked to central Sahel crisis spillover

HIGHLIGHTS

- Children and adolescents in the northern regions of Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo are facing the humanitarian consequences, including population displacement, of the spillover of the central Sahel crisis. Basic services are becoming overburdened, with schools and health facilities closing or functioning at minimum capacity, whilst people are in parallel also coping with public health emergencies and such climate-related disasters as floods.

- UNICEF will ensure emergency preparedness and response in affected areas while simultaneously strengthening national and local capacity and resilience to meet the humanitarian needs of refugees and internally displaced persons and support the communities that are hosting them.

- UNICEF requires $65.1 million to provide humanitarian assistance to 1.4 million people (refugees, internally displaced people and affected host communities), including 876,000 children. Needs are particularly acute for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection and education services. Supporting basic services will contribute to longer-term, sustainable solutions for these vulnerable communities.

KEY PLANNED TARGETS

- **304,111** children vaccinated against measles
- **211,254** primary caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- **361,435** children receiving individual learning materials
- **609,676** people reached with critical WASH supplies

IN NEED

- **6.1 million** people
- **3 million** children

TO BE REACHED

- **1.4 million** people
- **875,926** children

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US$65.1 million
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The spillover of the crisis in the central Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) has become a permanent threat to northern communities in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. Between January 2021 and October 2023, 882 security incidents were reported in the northern regions of these four coastal countries, including the use of improvised explosive devices. This situation is leading to more restrictions on social services and markets and a reduction in economic activity, which is also causing movements of populations internally and across borders.

Growing insecurity is forcing people to flee and is impacting negatively on the well-being and development of children and their families. In these four coastal countries, the number of internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees is now estimated at 134,000, including 36,000 children. These numbers could increase given political and conflict dynamics in the central Sahel countries.

The frequent cross-border and internal displacement of populations has placed pressure on already weak social services (health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation), and has made access to limited vital resources (food, drinking water, housing) very difficult. This impacts refugees, internally displaced persons, and host communities alike. It also heightens tensions among communities and in some areas has led to prejudice and violence against minorities. For host governments, the control of borders and the maintenance of safety and security in a volatile regional context is a primary concern. This has led at times to movement restrictions for affected populations and for humanitarian actors, impacting both access to and quality of services and the continuity of service provision.

An increasing number of schools have been obliged to close due to insecurity and other life-threatening events. This has forced children and adolescents to drop out of school and puts them at risk of exploitation, child labour, child marriage, migration (including by unaccompanied and separated children) and gender-based violence, with a disproportionate burden on adolescent girls. In Benin, 33 schools were closed due to insecurity at the end of June 2023, affecting 4,321 students (including 1,669 girls), compared with 9 closed in December 2022. A 2022 nutrition survey in Togo showed a prevalence of wasting approaching the 10 per cent critical threshold in the areas bordering Burkina Faso.

Coastal countries are also subject to other shocks, and have experienced recurrent flooding and epidemics that have aggravated existing vulnerabilities of affected communities. These are expected to have a long-term impact on sanitation, livelihoods, social infrastructure, and public health.

SECTOR NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>people in need of health assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>738,000</td>
<td>people in need of nutrition assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 million</td>
<td>children in need of protection services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 million</td>
<td>children in need of education support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6 million</td>
<td>people lack access to safe water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STORY FROM THE FIELD

Conflict in the central Sahel is forcing families from their homes and into coastal countries. Communities in northern Benin are welcoming refugees from Burkina Faso, like Abasse’s family. UNICEF and its partners are providing essential supplies including household items, clothes and toys to help families restart their lives. Support with school enrolment means that children are back at school after three years of interrupted learning. Yet in this community that is dependent on agriculture, unpredictable rainy periods have made it hard for Abasse’s dad to find work, and the family’s future remains uncertain.

Read more about this story here.
HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In line with its Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF’s humanitarian strategy for these four coastal countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Togo) is built around ensuring emergency preparedness and response to humanitarian situations, while simultaneously looking for opportunities to strengthen national and local capacities, systems and services and build community resilience to meet needs linked to the influx of refugee and internally displaced populations. UNICEF applies a gender-sensitive approach and promotes the participation of communities and youth.

The humanitarian response in the coastal countries is multisectoral. Integrated interventions encompassing health, nutrition and WASH are a priority; and education, child protection and mental health and psychosocial support are also critical. UNICEF promotes localization by strengthening the capacity and resources of local organizations to lead humanitarian responses and deliver aid.

UNICEF will pursue a humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach to develop resilience and support social cohesion among communities. UNICEF acknowledges host government efforts to provide basic services in northern regions affected by the central Sahel crisis spillover and to undertake integration processes for host communities and new arrivals.

To provide high-quality programmes for children in the region, UNICEF will keep investing in information management and knowledge exchange, regular needs assessments, the close monitoring of humanitarian response, and evaluations. Using its risk monitoring dashboard, UNICEF will build evidence-based interventions supported by data collection, analysis and crisis mapping, and will sustain advocacy and release communication products to raise the attention of coastal countries.

UNICEF’s strategy in these four coastal countries is closely aligned with the 2024 ‘Gulf of Guinea Joint Response Plan for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, and host communities’17 designed jointly with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme to have a joined-up, complementary response to address the needs of children and families affected by the spillover of the central Sahel crisis.

Cross-cutting issues such as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and accountability to affected populations are strongly prioritized. Disability inclusion will be systematically pursued. Social and behaviour change remain an integral component of UNICEF’s humanitarian strategy.

UNICEF will continue to support preparedness and contingency plans using timely monitoring and the generation and management of humanitarian information, with increased utilization of smart technology for forecasting and risk analysis. Anticipatory action, human resources support and pre-positioning of supplies will also be part of UNICEF’s strategic approach.

2024 PROGRAMME TARGETS

Health and HIV/AIDS
- 304,111 children vaccinated against measles, supplemental dose 18

Nutrition
- 97,919 children 6-59 months screened for wasting19
- 29,712 children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment20
- 211,254 primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling21

Child protection, GBVie and PSEA
- 215,499 children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support
- 482,865 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 806,313 people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations
- 10,500 children who have received individual case management

Education
- 207,139 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 361,435 children receiving individual learning materials22
- 1,102 teachers and facilitators trained in basic pedagogy and/or mental health and psychosocial support

Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 154,676 people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- 97,176 people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- 41,000 children using safe and appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces
- 609,676 people reached with critical WASH supplies

Social protection
- 101,000 households benefitting from new or additional social assistance (cash/in-kind) measures from government-funded programmes with UNICEF technical assistance support

Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)
- 41,000 households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers (including for social protection and other sectors)
- 4,279,450 affected people (children, caregivers, community members) reached with timely and life-saving information on how and where to access available services23
- 2,277,200 people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms
- 412,230 people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms

Rapid response mechanism
- 3,540 displaced, refugee and disaster-affected households receiving non-food items assistance

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.
UNICEF is requesting $65.1 million to meet the rapidly increasing humanitarian needs among children in the four coastal countries covered by this appeal, whether internally displaced, refugees or living in host communities. In alignment with inter-agency response plans and government initiatives, UNICEF will also work to meet other needs of vulnerable populations related to climate change, such as floods and potential disease outbreaks.

UNICEF’s humanitarian strategy and its regular development programming are complementary. UNICEF will address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable and contribute to building more resilient and shock-responsive systems. To do this, $7 million is critical to scale up child protection services, $13.2 million to provide access to health and nutrition services, $12.8 million to support safe water and safe hygiene practices, and $13.7 million to strengthen children’s access to education.

Funding will facilitate the continuation of basic health, nutrition, WASH and education services and ensure that local partners and authorities provide critical protection, mental health and psychosocial support to women, children and families forced to move and to host communities receiving and integrating these communities. It will also enable expanded investment in monitoring, preventing, and responding to child rights violations.

Without sufficient and timely funding in 2024, UNICEF and its partners will not be able to address the urgent humanitarian needs of nearly 1 million children in the region and build systems that provide sustainable medium- and long-term solutions to address worsening humanitarian situations linked to the spillover of the central Sahel crisis.

Support for this appeal will empower UNICEF to continue investing in readiness for public health crises and fostering enhanced social cohesion and resilience. The funding will be used to reach marginalized populations with vital services while reinforcing connections across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

### Funding Requirements in 2024

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal sector</th>
<th>Original 2024 HAC requirement (US$)</th>
<th>Revised 2024 HAC requirement (US$)</th>
<th>Funds available (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>6,237,400</td>
<td>5,472,400</td>
<td>1,241,577</td>
<td>4,230,823</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>7,611,312</td>
<td>7,774,312</td>
<td>917,633</td>
<td>6,856,679</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child protection</td>
<td>7,067,292</td>
<td>7,067,292</td>
<td>399,085</td>
<td>6,668,207</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>15,436,906</td>
<td>13,686,906</td>
<td>1,077,330</td>
<td>12,609,576</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>13,100,634</td>
<td>12,800,634</td>
<td>2,004,858</td>
<td>10,795,776</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection</td>
<td>5,183,930</td>
<td>5,183,930</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,183,930</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-sectoral</td>
<td>10,665,152</td>
<td>10,260,152</td>
<td>1,860,205</td>
<td>8,399,947</td>
<td>81.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid response</td>
<td>979,988</td>
<td>979,988</td>
<td>165,030</td>
<td>814,958</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>2,100,000</td>
<td>1,850,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>68,382,614</td>
<td>65,075,614</td>
<td>7,715,718</td>
<td>57,359,896</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectors</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>2024 total requirement (US$)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>603,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>2,460,000</td>
<td>1,409,400</td>
<td>5,472,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>2,700,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,680,000</td>
<td>2,394,312</td>
<td>7,774,312</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA</td>
<td>1,640,000</td>
<td>1,380,000</td>
<td>2,382,188</td>
<td>1,665,104</td>
<td>7,067,29224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2,200,000</td>
<td>2,833,750</td>
<td>6,663,960</td>
<td>1,989,196</td>
<td>13,686,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, sanitation and hygiene</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>2,975,000</td>
<td>2,062,500</td>
<td>5,263,134</td>
<td>12,800,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,183,930</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,183,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)</td>
<td>5,600,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>1,612,301</td>
<td>2,272,851</td>
<td>10,260,15225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid response</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>479,988</td>
<td>979,98826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15,543,000</td>
<td>13,647,680</td>
<td>20,360,949</td>
<td>15,523,985</td>
<td>65,075,614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. UNICEF activated its Corporate Emergency Level 2 Scale-up Procedure for Sahel Crisis for the following period: 19 July 2022 - 19 December 2023. 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.

2. The number of people in need is the sum of people in need in the four countries covered by this appeal. The figures are calculated using UNICEF internal needs assessments, based on estimates/projections, given that for these four countries there are no inter-agency needs/planning documents.

3. People in need: Benin (3,513,515), Côte d'Ivoire (430,000), Ghana (1,132,000) and Togo (1,047,603).

4. 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.

5. The number of children in need is the sum of children in need in the four countries covered by this appeal. The figures are calculated using UNICEF internal needs assessments, based on estimates/projections, given that for those four countries there are no inter-agency needs/planning documents.

6. Children in need: Benin (1,791,893), Côte d'Ivoire (294,930), Ghana (475,440) and Togo (404,778).

7. The number of people to be reached is the sum of people to be reached in the four countries covered by this appeal. The figures are calculated at the country office level based on the 2024 programme targets.

8. People to be reached: Total 1,429,928 Benin (500,000), Côte d'Ivoire (130,760), Ghana (298,851) and Togo (500,317).

9. The number of children to be reached is the sum of children to be reached in the four countries covered by this appeal. The figures are calculated based on the 2024 programme targets.

10. Children to be reached: Total: 875,926 Benin (255,000), Côte d'Ivoire (112,500), Ghana (173,454) and Togo (334,972).


15. 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.

16. 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.


18. A drop in targets as there is a drop in CiV targets for measles vaccination due to the focus laid on the 2 regions affected by sahel crisis (Tchologo and Bounkani). The population of Tchologo and Bounkani under 5 years old is estimated at 208,203 people (source: DCPEV monitoring service and study). The section targets 34 % of children under 5 years old (70,000). The unit cost of vaccinating a child against measles is 10 USD per child : 70,000 child x 10 USD

19. Intensification of screening for acute malnutrition in children aged 6-59 months at the community level and referral of cases. The activity targets 80'000 children aged 6-59 months for Côte d'Ivoire

20. Around 2,089 children aged 6-59 months suffering from severe acute malnutrition will be treated in the treatment centers. To do this, strengthening the supply chain is necessary to ensure availability of inputs for the management of SAM (F75, F100, RUTF) in the intervention areas.

21. A drop in targets as Côte d'Ivoire CO is targeting 0 for IYCF. The National advocacy was dependent on the SMART survey which has not yet been done. Hence accurate methodology to estimate targets for IYCF

22. Drop in targets due to drop in target for CiV as focused in made on the regions affected by crisis. Distribution of school kits to preschool, primary and secondary1 children estimate of children in host communities based on 2023 experience in regions affected by the Sahel crisis; figure to which the school age children of the RRP target were added

23. The population targeted is higher than the total number of people/children to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.

24. Includes $4,220,517 for child protection interventions; $1,436,087 for gender-based violence in emergencies interventions; and $1,410,687 for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse interventions.

25. Includes $8,481,067 for humanitarian cash transfers and $2,184,085 for social and behaviour change activities and community engagement.

26. These funds will be used for a timely response to the needs of vulnerable populations undergoing sudden displacement.

ENDNOTES