



unicef 
for every child

Humanitarian Action for Children

Children enjoy a nutritious meal after a cooking demonstration in their community, in Doghel Sigon, in northern Guinea, in July 2025. UNICEF supports local programmes that teach families how to prepare healthy, nutrient-rich meals, to help combat malnutrition and improve overall health.

West and Central Africa Region

HIGHLIGHTS¹

- In 2026, humanitarian needs in West and Central Africa will remain high due to acute conflict, recurrent disease outbreaks, natural disasters and the risk of civil unrest.
- To respond, UNICEF will collaborate with governments, civil society, and public and private institutions to strengthen emergency preparedness and response across key sectors: health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, education and social protection.
- UNICEF is appealing for \$92.6 million to meet the urgent needs of children in 16 countries: Benin, Cabo Verde, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.²
- This appeal includes support from the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office to all 24 countries of the region aimed at strengthening country-level capacities for coordinated, multisectoral emergency preparedness and humanitarian response.

IN NEED³



7.9 million people in need of health assistance



3.7 million people in need of nutrition assistance



2.5 million children in need of protection services



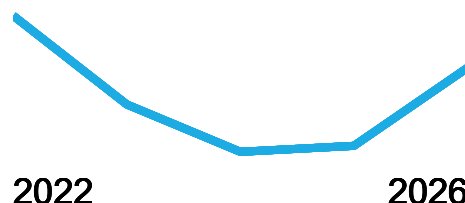
4.1 million children in need of education support



3.6 million people lack access to safe water

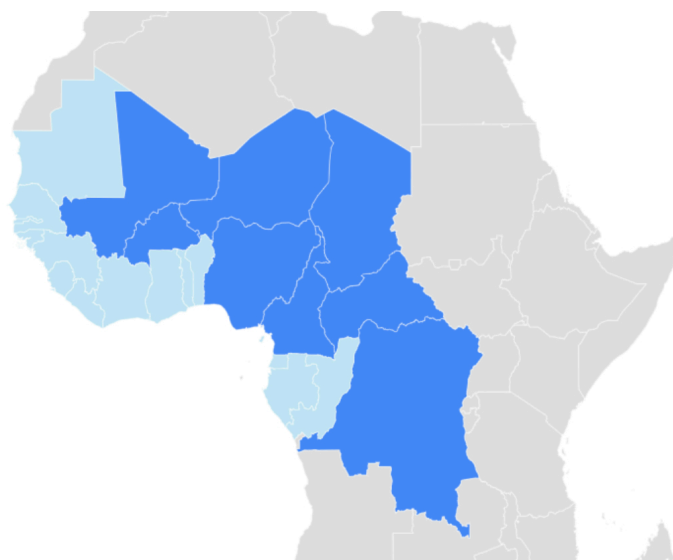
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$92.6 million



2022

2026



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal; those in darker blue have standalone appeals.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Public health emergencies are increasingly frequent and severe in West and Central Africa. Low vaccination coverage – especially in areas facing multiple, overlapping shocks – and overstretched health systems have led to recurrent outbreaks of measles, meningitis, polio, Ebola virus disease, Marburg virus disease, Lassa fever, diphtheria, cholera, H5A1 Influenza and mpox. These epidemics disproportionately affect children, and highlight the urgent need for increased emergency preparedness and response while also strengthening health systems.

Floods have also severely impacted the region, affecting 18 of 24 countries and more than 20.3 million people affected since 2022⁴. In 2025, around 1.5 million people⁵ were affected, with 732 deaths, 116,000 homes destroyed and major damage to schools, health facilities and farmland. This has worsened food insecurity and livelihoods. Each year, extreme flooding puts children at risk of displacement, family separation and disrupted education and healthcare. Flooding has also increased children's exposure to waterborne diseases, including cholera. Recurrent extreme climate hazards including flooding and periods of drought underscore the need for stronger climate resilience and preventive measures.

Conflict in the central Sahel continues to spill into Mauritania, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, placing growing pressure on fragile communities. Security is deteriorating along the Senegal–Mali–Mauritania border, causing displacement in the border areas. As of August 2025, Mauritania was hosting more than 177,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Mali.⁶ In coastal countries bordering Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, 262 security incidents were reported in 2025, including attacks, abductions, protests and use of improvised explosive devices.⁷ An estimated 206,000 people have fled to Gulf of Guinea countries though actual displacement figures are likely higher due to incomplete registration, despite ongoing efforts by governments and international partners to register newly arrived individuals from central Sahel countries.⁸

Displacement disrupts access of both displaced and host populations to education and essential services, exposing children to exploitation and abuse. Women, girls and children with disabilities face heightened risks due to compounded vulnerabilities, systemic barriers and exclusion from humanitarian assistance.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

UNICEF in West and Central Africa prioritizes emergency preparedness and multisectoral responses to deliver life-saving support to children and families affected by crises, in line with the Humanitarian Reset. The approach reinforces national systems, builds community resilience and promotes the integration of refugees and internally displaced persons into host communities. It is also designed to enhance cross-border capacity to address population movements and provide a humanitarian response.

A key element of this strategy is the pre-positioning of essential supplies through strategic hubs in Accra, Ghana and Douala, Cameroon. These are operated in collaboration with the World Food Programme. These hubs serve critical corridors across the Sahel and in coastal and central African countries: they enable rapid delivery of life-saving items and mitigate supply chain disruptions, surges in demand and funding gaps. Additional contingency stocks in country offices and strategic supplier locations further enhance readiness.

UNICEF advances localization by reinforcing the capacity of local and national organizations to lead humanitarian responses, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. This improves coordination, enhances disaster preparedness and fosters community ownership, ensuring that interventions are sustainable and tailored to local needs.

Aligned with government and inter-agency plans, UNICEF supports integrated responses across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. In Mauritania, UNICEF contributes to the 2025 Refugee and Resilience Plan in Mauritania⁹ by promoting the inclusion of Malian refugees in national social protection systems and combining regular safety nets with shock-responsive mechanisms.

To contain outbreaks and protect vulnerable populations, public health emergencies remain a priority area of work. UNICEF supports coordinated, multisectoral actions, including risk communication and community engagement, infection prevention and control and supply and vaccination efforts.

UNICEF places communities and youth at the centre of its humanitarian approach. UNICEF promotes gender equality, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, ending child marriage, and ensuring accountability to affected populations. Social and behaviour change efforts emphasize gender and disability inclusion, which reflects UNICEF's commitment to resilient systems and child protection throughout the region.

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.

STORY FROM THE FIELD



In Tchaourou, in the Borgou department in northern Benin, thousands of mothers are defying rain, mud and long distances to protect their children. Among them is Maman Douté, who braved a storm to ensure her newborn received vital vaccines and vitamin A during a national catch-up campaign. Supported by UNICEF and its partners, this initiative is reaching zero-dose and under-vaccinated children across the region, saving lives and building a healthier, more equitable future.

Read the full story of courage, community and care here.

[Read more about this story here](#)

In the commune of Tchaourou, in northern Benin, Maman Douté braves bad weather and obstacles to have her baby, 1 month, vaccinated during a major vaccination catch-up campaign in July 2025.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2026

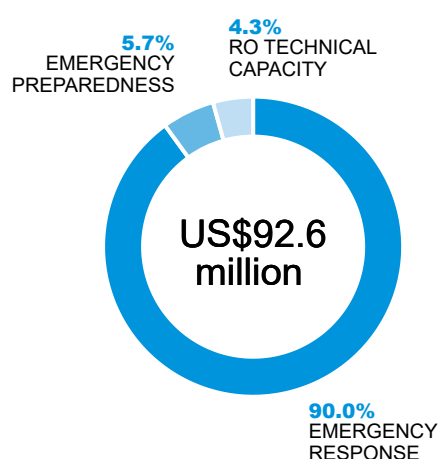
The UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office is seeking \$92.6 million through this appeal to respond to humanitarian needs in 16 countries in West and Central Africa. The appeal targets children affected by escalating conflict in the central Sahel and by the growing impacts of climate change, including floods, droughts and disease outbreaks. Funding will support life-saving interventions in key sectors: nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, education and social protection, with integrated, cross-cutting programmes that uphold children's rights.

Additionally, the appeal includes support from the regional office to all 24 countries in the region, focusing on emergency preparedness and response. Recurrent hazards including epidemics and flooding continue to threaten children's health. UNICEF is working to strengthen systems that reduce these risks and mitigate their impact on communities – and urgently calls for donor support to sustain progress and protect children.

UNICEF's approach bridges humanitarian response and long-term development, ensuring comprehensive support for vulnerable communities. By integrating humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, UNICEF delivers both immediate relief and sustainable solutions for displaced families and host communities.

Aligned with coordinated response plans from national authorities and partners, UNICEF will deliver gender-responsive services in health, nutrition, WASH and education. It will also support local actors to provide mental health, psychosocial support and protection services, especially for children with disabilities and youth in crisis settings.

Without this funding, UNICEF will be unable to provide effective emergency preparedness and response for the millions of children and women in the region affected by humanitarian crises in 2026. Children face repeated shocks that strain fragile systems and demand urgent action. Investing in preparedness, early warning systems and resilient services is essential. Flexible, multi-year funding will enable UNICEF to deliver impactful, high-quality programmes and reach the most marginalized with critical support.



Sector	2026 requirements (US\$)
Emergency response	83,332,744
Emergency preparedness	5,260,000
RO technical capacity	4,000,417 ¹³
Total	92,593,161

Sectors	Benin	Cote d'Ivoire	Ghana	Mauritania	Togo	Other countries	Regional Office	2026 total requirement (US\$)
Health (including public health emergencies) ¹⁰	1,125,888	1,620,000	2,685,693	2,480,358	798,910	-	-	8,710,849
Nutrition	5,210,562	1,450,000	1,438,955	1,682,287	803,000	-	-	10,584,804
Child protection and GBVIE ¹¹	1,440,000	1,600,000	1,100,000	640,000	1,678,811	-	-	6,458,811
Education	2,345,000	2,100,000	1,425,002	1,848,000	1,303,410	-	-	9,021,412
Water, sanitation and hygiene	2,300,000	2,950,000	1,525,000	1,400,000	6,233,210	-	-	14,408,210
Social protection	-	300,000	500,000	175,000	-	-	-	975,000
Emergency response ¹²	-	-	-	-	-	20,000,000	-	20,000,000
Regional office technical capacity	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,000,417	4,000,417
Cross-sectoral (AAP, SBC, and PSEA) ¹³	7,798,600	3,178,000	1,000,000	150,000	405,906	-	-	12,532,506
Rapid response ¹⁴	-	-	100,000	50,000	491,152	-	-	641,152
Preparedness/Anticipatory Actions for humanitarian action	300,000	250,000	200,000	300,000	60,000	2,150,000	-	3,260,000
Regional hubs management and operational costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000,000	2,000,000
Total	20,520,050	13,448,000	9,974,650	8,725,645	11,774,399	22,150,000	6,000,417	92,593,161

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ENDNOTES

1. The appeal budget has increased from \$56.2 million in 2025 to \$92.6 million in 2026 due to the expansion of its geographical scope, which now covers 16 countries instead of 10. This broader coverage includes the five countries previously under a multi-country appeal in 2025—the four coastal countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo) and Mauritania—along with Cabo Verde, which was not part of the previous Humanitarian Action for Children appeal. The 2026 regional appeal also introduces a subregional focus on the spillover of armed conflict in the Sahel into neighbouring coastal countries and Mauritania, which were formerly addressed under the central Sahel outflow appeal.
2. In addition, eight other countries experiencing emergencies are launching standalone appeals.
3. The in-need figures reflect the number of people with pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports in countries covered by this regional appeal. The figures are calculated at the country office level using official data and UNICEF and partner internal needs assessments (given that these countries do not have inter-agency needs/planning documents).
4. OCHA, West and Central Africa: Flooding situation – 2024 Overview, as of 10 February 2025, OCHA, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/west-and-central-africa-flooding-situation-2024-overview-10-february-2025>.
5. OCHA, West and Central Africa: 2025 monitoring of the flooding situation, as of 9 October 2025, OCHA, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/west-and-central-africa-2025-monitoring-flooding-situation-9-october-2025>.
6. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Registered Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Mauritania as of 31 August 2025, UNHCR, 23 September 2025.
7. ACLED, database, as of 30 June 2025, for the following regions: Benin (Atacora, Alibori); Côte d'Ivoire (Folon, Bagoue, Poro, Tchologo, Bounkani, Gontougou); Ghana (Upper West, Upper East); and Togo (Savanes).
8. UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and government sources: Benin (50,547); Côte d'Ivoire (72,221); Ghana (18,789); Mauritania (309,000); Togo (64,793), available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/regions/rbwca>.
9. <https://reliefweb.int/report/mauritania/2025-refugee-and-resilience-plan-mauritania-3rp-mauritania>.
10. The West and Central Africa Regional Office will provide multisectoral assistance, including healthcare services, to those affected by complex emergencies response in the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone.
11. Includes \$8,773,600 for humanitarian cash transfers; \$979,856 for accountability to affected populations; \$1,636,742 for social and behaviour change activities and community engagement; and \$1,142,308 million for interventions around protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.
12. These funds will mostly be used for a timely response to the needs of vulnerable populations undergoing sudden displacement.
13. Including anticipatory actions for humanitarian action.