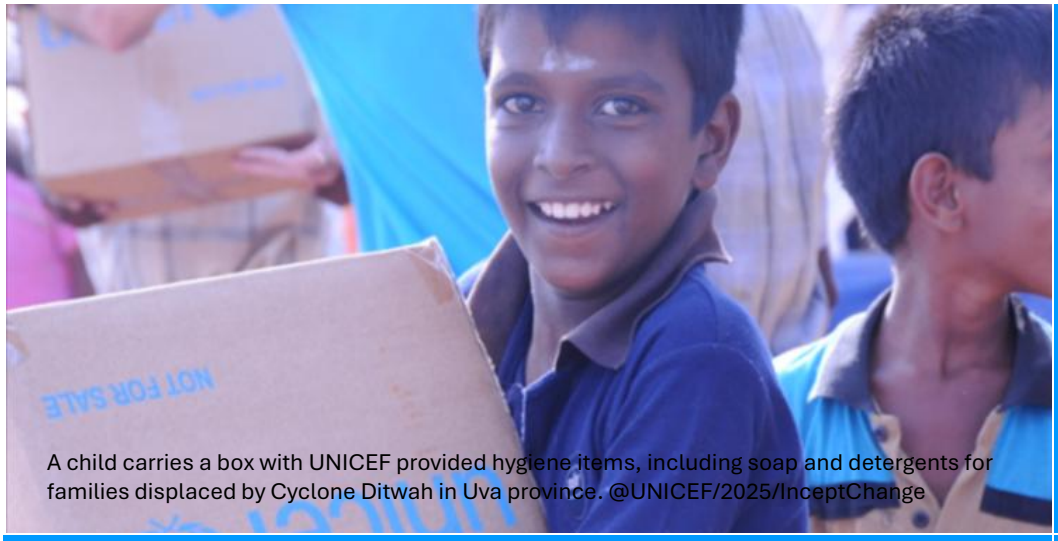

A child carries a box with UNICEF provided hygiene items, including soap and detergents for families displaced by Cyclone Ditwah in Uva province. @UNICEF/2025/InceptChange

UNICEF Sri Lanka

unicef for every child
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Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8

CYCLONE DITWAH

Reporting Date: 12 February 2026

Highlights

- Over seven weeks after Cyclone Ditwah made landfall, displacement is declining but humanitarian needs persist, including sustained WASH services, improved access to SAM treatment, continuity of learning for affected children, and protection measures to prevent family separation and expand psychosocial support.
- UNICEF continued to provide life-saving assistance across sectors. 49,600 people benefited from WASH services and supplies, 98,050 children received education support, nutrition interventions reached 12,102 people, and child protection supported 42,624 individuals through case management, family reunification, and psychosocial services.
- UNICEF ordered US$945,000 in emergency supplies, with additional supplies over US$1 million procured shortly.
- UNICEF requires US$7.8 million to provide immediate, life-saving support to children and families affected by Cyclone Ditwah. As of 12 February, US$5.9 million has been received and US$0.3 million pledged, leaving a funding gap of US$1.6 million.

Situation in Numbers

1.2 million
People in Need [1]

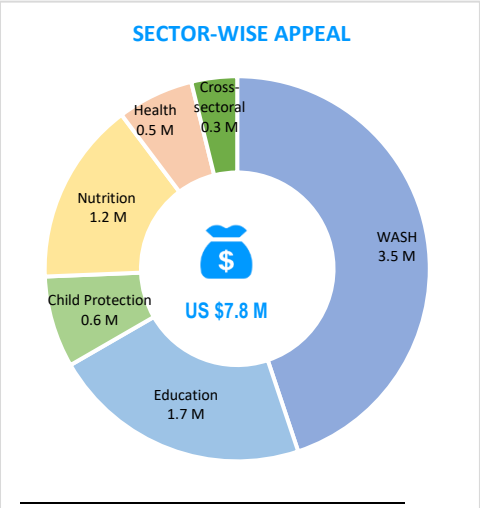
526,609
Children in Need[2]

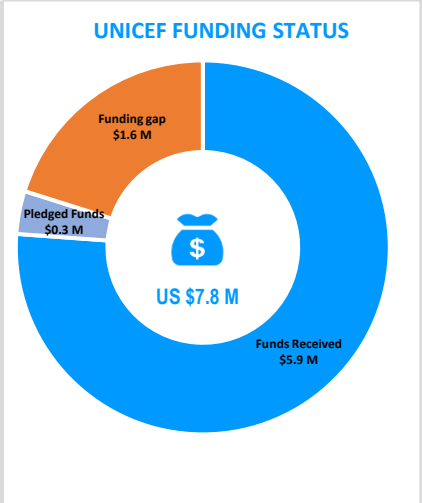
1,682[3]
Schools impacted

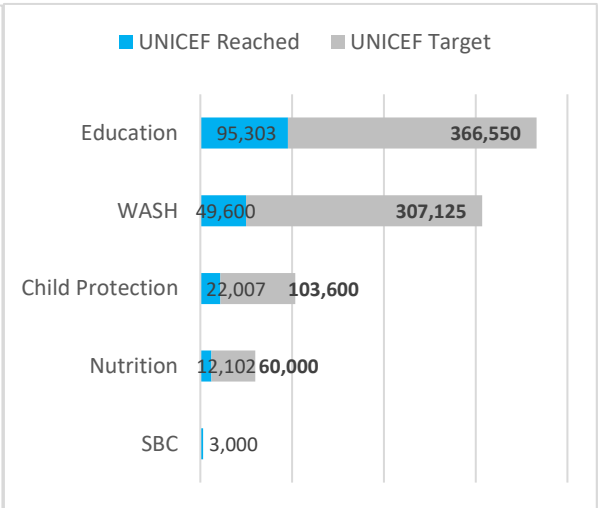
576,936
UNICEF people targeted

340,450
UNICEF children target

URGENT NEEDS, TARGET AND APPEAL







[1] Humanitarian Priorities Plan (HPP), Cyclone Ditwah, Sri Lanka, issued on 11 December 2025
[2] 526,609 children were estimated to need Education support in the HPP – this is the highest number of children in need across sectors.
[3] 1,682 primary and secondary schools are affected according to the Rapid Education Sector needs assessment, January 2026. In addition, 2,700 pre-primary education facilities have been affected.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Cyclone Ditwah made landfall on the East coast of Sri Lanka on 28 November 2025, causing widespread floods and deadly landslides across the nation. Some 650 people are reported to have died, while 173 people remain missing.[4] According to the Humanitarian Priorities Plans (HPP), over 2.2 million people were affected and an estimated 1.2 million people are in need of assistance, including almost 527,000 children.

Displacement peaked at 308,000 people,[5] with over 161,600 people who remain displaced as of 10 February, 96 per cent of them in host families or rented accommodation (155,255 people in Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Matale, Badulla and Kegalle) and 4 per cent in safety centres (6,413 people in 81 safety centers).[6] Many cannot return home due to severe housing damage, ongoing landslide risks, and relocation needs for families in high-risk zones. Economic vulnerability further delays recovery for thousands of households.

The Government of Sri Lanka, with support from the UN, EU, World Bank, ADB and partners, led a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) to quantify damages, losses and recovery needs following Cyclone Ditwah. Early findings[7] confirm extensive impacts on social sectors essential for children: large-scale housing destruction, major disruption to education, health and WASH services, and significant losses across agriculture and livelihoods, heightening risks for vulnerable households. Protection concerns—including increased GBV risks and psychosocial distress in overcrowded shelters— were consistently highlighted across assessment findings. UNICEF is actively engaged in the assessment, leading the Education and WASH chapters and contributing technical inputs to Nutrition and Protection, ensuring that children's needs and essential services are fully reflected in recovery planning. While early recovery planning is underway, significant humanitarian needs persist.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response[8]

All UNICEF response interventions are implemented within the framework of the Humanitarian Priorities Plan (HPP), ensuring coherence with the collective response of the humanitarian community and alignment with nationally agreed priorities.

The overall implementation of the response remains on track; however, several operational challenges continue to affect delivery across sectors. In WASH, shortages of government technical staff are slowing repairs and maintenance, with recruitment support underway to address these gaps. In Education, host schools face space, staffing and teaching aid constraints after absorbing students from fully damaged schools, while damaged roads and limited bus services prolong travel and increase costs for teachers and students. Across sectors, there are delays in receiving the official itemization and specifications of the assistance to be provided. This has slowed procurement and downstream implementation.

Supply

Since the onset of the Cyclone and as of 10 February 2026, UNICEF has ordered emergency supplies worth US$944,821. Additional supplies are in the pipeline pending final technical specifications from partners, with over US$1 million in procurement scheduled for the week of 9 February, including gully bowsers, water pipes and fittings, and hardware materials for WASH facilities in safety centres and temporary learning spaces.

WASH

Response highlights

- 49,600 people have been reached with WASH supplies, including water, hygiene kits, chlorine and other disinfection and cleaning materials; 16 per cent of the overall target of 307,125.[9]
- Over 650 contaminated dug and boreholes have been cleaned and restored to function.

[4] Disaster Management Center, Situation Report as of 10 February 2026.
[5] Summary presentation of Cyclone Ditwah Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) 2026, 3 February 2026.
[6] Disaster Management Center, Situation Report as of 10 February 2026.
[7] Summary presentation of Cyclone Ditwah Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) 2026, 3 February 2026.
[8] In SitRep #5 higher reach figures were provided for the different sectors. These numbers had included double counting of certain beneficiaries and has since been reviewed.
[9] There might have been some double counting in previous number of people reached communicated, explaining the decrease in number to the previous SitReps.

- Construction materials, including Hume pipes, lids, sand, metal, blocks, cement, water tanks, PVC pipes, and transport support were provided to enable the installation and repair of essential WASH facilities in safety centers across the Rattota district area of the Kandy district.
- Sanitation facilities are being provided at 20 safety centres in seven district divisions of Kandy district.
- Materials required for the provision of urgent WASH facilities have been procured and delivered to two temporary safety centres (Kandepuhulpola and Haggalawatta) for over 50 families in the Badulla district, with procurement of materials for other safety centers ongoing.
- Procurement of materials for the rehabilitation of 6 community water supply systems that serve over 250 families is in progress.
- With UNICEF support, the Department of National Community Water Supply (DNCWS) is mobilizing additional technical staff to accelerate the rehabilitation of rural water supply schemes.
- In collaboration with Education department officials, UNICEF initiated the rehabilitation of WASH facilities in 37 schools in Badulla and Nuwara Eliya.
- UNICEF is facilitating the desludging of 36 school septic tanks in the Nuwara Eliya district and 76 school septic tanks in the Badulla district, while initiating the procurement of acutely needed desludging equipment.

Planned priority activities

- Supply and distribution of essential materials, including pipes, pipe fittings, pumps and other equipment required for community water supply systems.
- Completion and handover of WASH facilities in 20 safety centres to the relevant authorities in Kandy.
- Procurement and delivery of materials for rehabilitation of WASH facilities in schools and safety centres.
- Procurement of a gully emptier to facilitate the desludging of septic tanks.
- Recruitment of 10 technical officers to support the rehabilitation of the rural supply scheme and one chemist to strengthen the nine existing laboratories for water quality testing.

Child Protection

Response highlights

- Since the onset of the response, 42,624 children, women and men were reached with Child Protection support provided by UNICEF and its partners from the Government Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS) and the CSOs Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, Rural Development Foundation, and MHPSS.net; 41 per cent of its target of 103,600 people.
- 2,981 children (60 per cent of the target) received direct child protection support during the response. This includes 690 children assisted through case management and protection services delivered by DPCSS and 2,291 by CSO partners.
- 32 children were reunified with their families.
- 28,504 children and 11,377 caregivers (40 per cent of the target) were reached with protection services in 45 Child Friendly Spaces in Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Ampara, Puttalam, and Kandy.
- 5,481 individuals benefited from community-based or targeted MHPSS services since the onset of the response.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Institute for Health Policy/MHPSS.net is continuing to provide psychological first aid orientation to government personnel in Badulla, one of the most affected districts.
- 553 frontline workers were trained in the provision of basic MHPSS (Psychological First Aid).

Planned priority activities

- Additional Child Friendly Spaces will be established in remaining long-term safety centres and in most vulnerable returnee communities in North Central and North Western Provinces.

Nutrition

Response highlights

- 12,102 people were reached by UNICEF and its partners from Scaling Up Nutrition People's Forum (SUN PF) with nutrition support since the onset of the emergency; 20 per cent of its target of 60,000 people.
- 1,271 children with severe or moderate acute malnutrition received treatment.

- 1,746 children over six months with moderate malnutrition received BP-5[10] emergency rations, a high-energy food supplement.
- 2,583 pregnant women and 2,110 breastfeeding women were provided with micronutrients and nutritious food and 1,526 pregnant and lactating women received cash or voucher support.
- UNICEF has entered new partnerships with Sarvodaya, Children's Emergency Relief International (CERI), OfERR Ceylon, and Scaling UP Nutrition Peoples Forum to enrol 3,500 Severely Acute Malnourished Children for treatment in the 10 worst affected districts, in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Initial orientation and planning of the clinics and inception meetings have commenced.
- UNICEF, in partnership with SUN PF, Sarvodaya, OfERR Ceylon and CERI, conducted a mapping exercise on daily main meals provided in the safety centres and transitional accommodations to identify gaps against minimum acceptable diet standards. The findings will inform the design of targeted meal-enrichment support for pregnant women and children under 2 years in the districts of Kandy, Kagalle, Nuwara Eliya and Badulla.

Planned priority activities (Next 10 days)

- Household visits will be conducted by CSO partners to identify children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and register them for admission to outpatient nutrition clinics in tertiary hospitals and specially organized outreach clinics.
- The Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) package for the SAM management will be operationalized during household visits by the CSO field staff and volunteers across 10 districts.
- Following the conclusion of the main meal provision assessments, the meal enrichment programme will be operationalized targeting 1,000 pregnant women and children under 2 years, affected by the cyclone, in Badulla, Nuwara Eliya, Kegalle and Kandy districts for three months.
- Procurement of 4,000 cartons of BP-100 therapeutic food will be undertaken to support the treatment of SAM Children in the country.

Health

Planned priority activities[11]

- Following the completion of the needs assessment with the Family Health Bureau of the Ministry of Health, UNICEF has initiated the procurement of essential medical supplies and equipment to ensure uninterrupted maternal, newborn, child health, and nutrition services in the most affected areas.

Education

Response highlights

- UNICEF, in collaboration with the Provincial Departments of Education, have reached 98,050 children with the emergency education response; representing 26.75 per cent of the target of 366,550 people.
- UNICEF distributed 9,600 primary and secondary student individual learning kits, in addition to the 12,900 primary student individual learning kits already distributed earlier to affected students across all nine provinces through the Provincial Departments of Education.
- 1,270 school teaching learning kits (e.g. localized school in a box) were ordered to support the resumption of learning in TLS and affected primary schools.
- For 30 severely damaged schools and those requiring permanent relocation in Central and Uva, the design for TLS was completed and plan for their establishment agreed between high-level provincial authorities, UNICEF and the army tri-forces.
- A total of 495 school cleaning supplies have been distributed since the onset of the response to severely affected schools across the nine provinces, ensuring safe school reopening.
- The Ministry of Education, with UNICEF support, drafted the national Education Sector-Wide Response Plan – from preschool through higher education. Additional consultations were held with sub-sector authorities to validate the plan. Provincial disaster response plans are now being developed, with UNICEF support and based on the national framework, to guide local level implementation.

[10] BP-5 is a compact, ready-to-eat fortified food to provide essential nutrients and energy for individuals with moderate malnutrition

[11] UNICEF has not carried out any new Health response activities since the SitRep published on 1 January. Please see previous SitReps for information about UNICEF support provided to the health response.

- Data collectors across all provinces were trained for the school-based needs assessment of affected schools. Data collected was completed across all provinces and is now being analysed by MoE in order to inform the implementation of the Response Plan.

Planned priority activities

- Finalize supply orders for about 500 preschool and 180 secondary school teaching-learning material kits, 120 digital devices for TLS, and materials and services to support the establishment of TLS in Central and Uva provinces.
- Complete distribution of 1,400 individual student learning kits in North Central and North Western provinces.
- Finalize the needs assessment data analysis, provincial disaster response plans and begin implementation at national and provincial level.

Social Behaviour Change (SBC), Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Response highlights

- Approximately 5,000 parents and caregivers were reached with guidance materials on the appropriate use of BP-5, developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.
- Together with UNFPA, its co-lead of the AAP Working Group, UNICEF facilitated the consolidation of complaints and feedback received by partner organizations to better inform and coordinate emergency response. UNICEF and UNFPA also supported regular information-sharing and learning among working group members to strengthen accountability and responsiveness across the response.
- To address increased dengue risks following Cyclone Ditwah, UNICEF, in collaboration with the National Dengue Control Unit of the Ministry of Health, developed and disseminated promotional materials on dengue prevention and control practices targeting children, parents, school communities, and the wider public, reaching 8766 schools across all districts and 365 MOH areas across the country, targeting child welfare clinics, maternal and well woman clinics.
- UNICEF supported the National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC) to draft the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and a training package for staff involved in the proposed Complaints and Feedback Mechanism, which will target people in safe centres and individuals receiving government cash disbursements.
- UNICEF continues to train volunteers and new implementing partners on PSEA, with reporting channels displayed in safe and community centres.

Planned priority activities

- UNICEF, through the AAP Working Group, will conduct capacity-building training on Accountability to Affected People for government authorities, UN agencies, and INGO/NGO/CBO partners engaged in the disaster response.
- UNICEF, through the AAP Working Group, will develop a digital dashboard to improve the visibility and analysis of complaints and feedback received from communities, and to support their systematic use in informing the emergency response.
- UNICEF will support the National Disaster Relief Services Centre (NDRSC) to orient staff on the proposed Complaints and Feedback Mechanism to facilitate its operationalization.

Funding Requirement

On 11 December, a costed Humanitarian Priorities Plan (HPP) was released, requesting US$ 35.3 million, with UNICEF's share amounting to US$ 7.8 million.

UNICEF requires US$ 7.8 million to deliver immediate, life-saving assistance to children and families affected by the floods. As of 12 February , UNICEF received US$ 5.9 million, and an additional US$ 0.3 million has been pledged. UNICEF thanks the Governments of Japan, Norway, Cyprus, UK and New Zealand; ECHO; CERF; the Gates Foundation and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints via the United States National Committee for UNICEF (Natcom) and the German Natcom for their generous and timely contributions.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF Sri Lanka is coordinating closely with the Government, national and sub-national authorities, and international, local CSOs and NGO partners to coordinate an integrated humanitarian response.

UNICEF co-leads the WASH, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection response. UNICEF is co-leading the WASH Sector with the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Water Supply, the Education Sector with Save the Children, the Protection Sector with UNFPA, and the Nutrition sub-Sector under WFP and FAO's overall leadership. Furthermore, UNICEF is leading the PSEA Taskforce and co-leading the AAP Working Group with UNFPA. Regular meetings are held within all these coordination groups, bringing together Government, UN agencies, INGOs, and NNGO partners to ensure a harmonized response. UNICEF is an active actor in the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), as well as the Inter-Sector Coordination Group.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

Over 1,500 UNICEF food vouchers were provided as relief to cyclone-affected families with children under five, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding mothers.

UNICEF helps restore schools for learning following #Cycloneditwah

UNICEF thanks donors for walking alongside children affected by #Cycloneditwah in Sri Lanka

UNICEF has provides school kits across the country to help children impacted by Cyclone Ditwah return to school with hope

Building Resilience After Cyclone Ditwah: UNICEF Strengths partner Emergency teams capacity on PSEA

Equipped with stationery, children return to school to learn with UNICEF support

Next Update: 2 March 2026

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