Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

This complements the full Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), available on UNICEF’s website at: http://www.unicef.org/emerg/index_commitments.html.

For further information on the CCCs, or UNICEF’s work in humanitarian action and post-crisis recovery, please contact: Christine Knudsen, Chief of Interagency and Humanitarian Partnership Section (Geneva), cknudsen@unicef.org, or Genevieve Boutin, Chief of Humanitarian Policy Section (New York), gboutin@unicef.org.

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The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action – the CCCs – are UNICEF’s central humanitarian policy to uphold the rights of children affected by humanitarian crisis. They are a framework for humanitarian action, around which UNICEF seeks to engage with partners. The updated CCCs continue to promote predictable, effective and timely humanitarian action, and to clearly outline the areas in which UNICEF can best contribute to results. Initially developed in 1998 and reviewed in 2004, the current revision brings UNICEF’s overarching humanitarian policy up to date with changes in the context in which humanitarian action takes place, including new evidence and best practices, as well as humanitarian reform, in particular the Cluster Approach.

The CCCs are based on global human rights standards and norms for humanitarian action. UNICEF’s scope of action will be adapted depending on context. UNICEF’s role may include promoting the CCCs through advocacy, leadership, cluster roles, or within humanitarian country teams. In some contexts, and in sectors and geographic areas where UNICEF has a comparative advantage, UNICEF’s humanitarian response may expand beyond the CCCs. UNICEF is also committed to ensuring that humanitarian action is understood with all rights of children and women being considered as per the CRC and CEDAW.

Fig. 1 Programme and Operational Commitments

Rapid Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation

Operational Commitments

Programme Commitments

Advocacy

Child and Public

Operational Commitments

Supply

III. Advocate on behalf of children and women with government and other partners in humanitarian situations to ensure that the benchmarks are achieved, through UNICEF programmes or other means. This means UNICEF and the CCCs are relevant in contexts where UNICEF and IASC partners have limited programmes.

IV. Ensure a minimum emergency preparedness in each of the CCC sectors and clusters, as well as within UNICEF.

WHAT ARE THE CCCs?

The CCCs are a framework for humanitarian action that prioritizing sustainability and preparedness early and reliable response, but also emphasizing partnerships not only in humanitarian action, and to clearly outline the areas in which UNICEF can best contribute to results. Initially developed in 1998 and reviewed in 2004, the current revision brings UNICEF’s overarching humanitarian policy up to date with changes in the context in which humanitarian action takes place, including new evidence and best practices, as well as humanitarian reform, in particular the Cluster Approach.

The CCCs guide UNICEF’s work with partners not only in humanitarian response, but also emphasizing preparedness and early recovery. The CCCs recognize that prioritizing sustainability and ownership in humanitarian response can speed up a transition from life-saving intervention to recovery and can support self-initiated recovery actions by affected populations.

WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES?

Human rights principles and global standards for humanitarian action are at the core of the CCCs across all phases of humanitarian action. The CCCs incorporate a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming, which ensures that human rights principles are translated into practice, including through an emphasis on marginalized and excluded populations. This requires that:

- Gender analysis informs decisions based on the different needs and capacities of girls, boys, women and men.
- Affected populations, including children, actively participate as rights holders.

The CCCs are fully grounded in the Principles of Partnership, with the recognition that strengthening partnership and collaboration is a key to success in humanitarian action and improved results for children and women.

Unicef recognizes the importance of collaborative partnerships in fulfilling and protecting the full spectrum of children’s rights. UNICEF cannot achieve early as possible and throughout all stages of the humanitarian response, recognizing the varying needs of specific population groups.

- Humanitarian action includes efforts to build the capacity of holders to make claims, and of duty bearers to meet their obligations.

WHAT IS UNICEF COMMITTING TO?

UNICEF recognizes the ability to fulfill the CCCs is clearly dependent to the partners’ ability to deliver on the ground. For its own external accountability, UNICEF commits to:

I. Ensure the situation of children and women is monitored, so that all humanitarian emergencies are detected, including slow onset emergencies.

II. Respond within defined programme sectors to contribute to the sectoral results and activities, to the extent that funding and presence of partners allow.

III. Advocate on behalf of children and women with government and other partners in humanitarian situations to ensure that the benchmarks are achieved, through UNICEF programmes or other means. This means UNICEF and the CCCs are relevant in contexts where UNICEF and IASC partners have limited programmes.

IV. Ensure a minimum emergency preparedness in each of the CCC sectors and clusters, as well as within UNICEF.

WHAT RESULTS DO THE CCCs SET FORTH

The CCCs bring a stronger results focus to UNICEF’s humanitarian action for children, from a strategic level of engagement with partners through to more specific programme actions.

The CCCs establish strategic results by sector, programmatic commitments and corresponding benchmarks derived from global standards in the respective programme areas (see Fig. 2 for Education example). This includes Sphere and INEE* as well as consolidated with the global cluster in the case of child protection. A technical justification is provided for each sector. Programme actions have been identified within preparedness, response and early recovery. In some country contexts, the activities may be different but will be designed to effectively contribute to the benchmarks.

UNICEF is currently developing tools and a strategy to strengthen performance monitoring, in line with the CCCs. The performance monitoring system will track UNICEF performance including in relation to its cluster commitments as well as programme performance with partners. This work focuses on strengthening results-focused monitoring and contributing to stronger humanitarian action by UNICEF and its operational and cluster partners.

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