



Nutrition in South Sudan

Briefing note

Major Developments January -March 2021

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis released in December 2020, during the period of December 2020 to March 2021, about 5.8 million people (48.3 per cent of the population) will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity, of which 1.8 million people Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity. 11,000 people are likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) acute food insecurity, specifically in Pibor Administration Area. The nutrition situation is critical, as 53 counties in the country (68 per cent of the counties) are classified as IPC Acute Malnutrition (AMN) Phase 3 and above from November 2020 to March 2021. About 1.4 million children under five years are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021, including 313,391 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).



SMART surveys conducted in two priority counties of Pibor (Jonglei State) and Tonj North (Warrap State) revealed a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence of 21.6 and 18.4 percent respectively, above the WHO emergency threshold of 15%.

A total of 50,865 children affected by SAM were treated in inpatient and outpatient therapeutic programs run by UNICEF and implementing partners across the country between January to March of 2021. 95.8 per cent of these children have recovered, 2.3 per cent dropped out of the programme and 0.3 per cent of the children died.

From January to March 2021, 457,464 caregivers were reached with maternal, infant, and young child feeding counselling. Standalone Vitamin A and deworming campaigns were completed in 61 counties and 1,847,978 children (53.6% girls) received Vitamin A and 1,535,326 children deworming tablets

 **50,865** children
with SAM treated
(Jan-Mar 2021)

 **95.8 %** recovery
rate among children
treated for SAM

 **457,464** caregivers
reached with maternal, infant
and young child feeding
counselling (Jan-Mar 2021)

Major Challenges:

- Because of COVID-19, the weight-for-height criteria for admission in nutrition centers has been suspended resulting in reduction in admissions of children with severe acute malnutrition in 2021.
- Monitoring and supervision activities have been hampered due to restriction of movement because of COVID-19.
- Capacity building (face-to-face) has been suspended to avoid transmission of COVID-19.
- Resources are largely focused on providing lifesaving treatment for acute malnutrition, instead of a combined approach with a focus on prevention AND treatment.
- After years of reduction in global acute malnutrition, the malnutrition rate has again exceeded the WHO emergency threshold of 15 per cent.
- Lack of access to basic services in South Sudan is a clear driver of the high levels of malnutrition. Malaria and acute watery diarrhoea are some of the lead causes of malnutrition in children.
- Many years of conflict have resulted in displacement, increasing rates of food insecurity and limited access to quality basic health and nutrition services; unhygienic environments due to poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) continue to impede prevention of malnutrition.
- There is not enough coordination across sectors, as tackling malnutrition requires a multisectoral approach.

Solutions:

- Mothers are trained to use the middle upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurement to monitor the health and nutrition status of their children.
- Remote monitoring is initiated, and tools are developed to replace the face-to-face monitoring.
- Virtual training has been initiated in the absence of face-to-face training.
- UNICEF in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies and Civil Society Organizations is initiating a paradigm shift to address wasting in children, moving away from primarily treating child suffering from acute malnutrition, to prevention and treatment with a multisectoral approach.
- UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to develop a multisectoral strategic plan (MNSP) addressing malnutrition with a concrete workplan and a budget for 2022-2030.
- In the 10 priority counties, more than 150 functional static and close to 50 outreach sites, implemented by 12 partners, have been set up. Between January and March 2021, a total of 9632 children with SAM were admitted in the program with highest admission in Akobo (26%) and Pibor (25%).

Funding situation:

UNICEF South Sudan nutrition appeal for 2021

US\$ 54 M

Current funding gap:

30 %

For more information, please contact:

Hamida R. Lasseko
Country Representative
hramadhani@unicef.org

Yves Willemot
Chief of Communication
ywillemot@unicef.org

Jennifer Schulz
Donor Relations Manager
jschulz@unicef.org

Updates:



1.4 M children under five expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2021



15.6% children suffering from chronic malnutrition (stunting)



68.1 % of infants exclusively breastfed for six months



7 % of children receive an adequate diet

UNICEF targets 2021:



242,549 children with SAM treated



1,138,303 pregnant and lactating women reached with maternal, infant and young child feeding counselling



2,588,550 children supplemented with vitamin A twice a year

UNICEF's generous nutrition donors



Follow the latest developments online:

