CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES REGION
The Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States region (CEE/CIS) is highly prone to both natural and man-made disasters, which pose a constant threat to the survival and well-being of children and women. Funds requested through this appeal will allow the UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office, which has an advisory and technical support function, to support the preparedness, mitigation and response actions of its Country Offices in the region, thereby enabling them to save lives, reduce suffering and support recovery after an emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>US$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Surge Capacity</td>
<td>350,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
<td>300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total**</td>
<td>750,000</td>
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1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) region is highly prone to natural hazards, which often lead to disastrous consequences due to the high vulnerabilities and weak coping capacities among the population. Among the natural disasters that are common in the region are earthquakes, floods, avalanches, mudslides, and drought as well as forest fires. Central Asia, South Caucasus and Turkey are highly vulnerable to major earthquakes. The situation is of particular concern in countries like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where there are large dumps of uranium deposits, which could be triggered and displaced by a major earthquake or landslides, thereby posing a serious health risk to the people living in those areas. In 2008, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan suffered from moderate earthquakes, which resulted in many deaths and destroyed schools, hospitals, roads and other critical infrastructure. Flooding, landslides and mudflows regularly occur in mountainous areas across the region. However, lately with the acceleration of global warming, floods have increasingly been observed in South-Eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria and Romania. At the same time, countries like Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have experienced drought conditions in some parts of their territories. In December 2007/January 2008, Tajikistan experienced its worst winter in three decades with temperatures reaching below 20°C in the capital, Dushanbe. This, coupled with the energy shortages, resulted in a humanitarian disaster, affecting almost 2 million people countrywide.

The region is also susceptible to political tensions, which at times led to violence and conflict. In August 2008, conflict broke out in Georgia, which caused massive damage and destruction, loss of human life and displacement of over 150,000 people both within Georgia and into the Russian Federation. The situation remains volatile in the Balkans, Caucasus and Turkey, with the presence of a number of unresolved political disputes.

High food and fuel prices have also increased poverty levels in the CEE/CIS region. Recent food security and nutrition surveys conducted in Central Asia have indicated that a large proportion of the population is requiring food assistance. For example, in Tajikistan, half a million people are severely food insecure and depend on government and international food assistance. Many poor families are resorting to changing the diet balance in order to cope with high prices. The impact has gone beyond the food sector. For example, some families have pulled out their children from schools as they can no longer afford to pay for school fees and supplies.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008

In 2008, the UNICEF CEE/CIS Regional Office supported a number of activities to strengthen humanitarian preparedness and response capacities of Country Offices in the region. The financial support available from the UK Department for International Development (DfID), the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and, more recently, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) has enabled the Regional Office to undertake a number of initiatives in emergency preparedness and response. The Regional Office organized two major emergency training events in the course of the year. One was an emergency preparedness training for UNICEF Country Offices in South-Eastern Europe, which updated staff on UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, cluster accountabilities, risk reduction opportunities etc. Second was a global training of trainers on emergency preparedness and response in October 2008. The workshop was co-facilitated with UNICEF’s Regional Office for the Americas and Caribbean and the Organizational Learning and Development Section/Division of Human Resources (OLDS/DHR), and included participants from all UNICEF regions, except South Asia. During the two emergencies in Georgia and Tajikistan, the Regional Office played a proactive role in initiating and facilitating response on the ground through supporting rapid mobilization of essential human resources, reviewing and finalizing advocacy and fundraising documents, as well as serving as interlocutor between Country Offices and Headquarters. In the run-up to the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, the Regional Office intensified its contingency planning efforts. It actively participated in the inter-agency meetings at the regional level and closely worked with the relevant Country Offices in maintaining response plans updated and current.

As outlined in the plans for 2008, the CEE/CIS Regional Office supported a number of disaster risk reduction initiatives during the course of the year. A key achievement was the commissioning of a risk and capacity mapping study in collaboration with the Regional Bureau of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR). The study has identified capacity gaps and opportunities for UNICEF’s action in the area of risk reduction in the region.
3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

**Coordination and Partnership**

The CEE/CIS Regional Office is an active member of the *ad hoc* regional emergency network, which is comprised of major emergency response agencies – Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN Development Programme/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP/BCPR), UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF – as well as other regional players, such as UN/ISDR, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The Regional Office hosted the Annual Work Plan meeting in January 2008, which provided the members an opportunity to share their work plans and discuss possibilities of joint activities.

During 2009, the CEE/CIS Regional Office will aim to further strengthen response capacities of UNICEF’s Country Offices in the region, especially focusing on the *Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies* and business continuity planning. Capacity-building activities will be implemented in the areas of nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education, where UNICEF is lead agency for nutrition and WASH clusters and co-lead for education together with Save the Children Alliance. Country Offices will be provided assistance in supporting national-level risk reduction and mitigation initiatives, especially related to education. They will also be supported in monitoring, analysing and developing appropriate responses to the impact of high consumer commodity prices, under UNICEF’s global guidance. Partnerships with other humanitarian actors will be strengthened through policy dialogue, work planning discussions and other mechanisms.

**Regional Surge Capacity (US$ 350,000)**

Lessons learnt from the two big emergencies in 2008 in the CEE/CIS region (i.e., Georgia and Tajikistan) have underscored the need to strengthen surge capacity at the regional level, which will enable timely support to the countries responding to emergencies. This requires the Regional Office to maintain a small emergency fund to support rapid mobilization of critical human resources, equipment and supplies within the region, prior to the activation of the global system.

**Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning (US$ 100,000)**

The CEE/CIS Regional Office will continue to provide technical guidance to Country Offices as well as other humanitarian partners (such as UN Country Teams (UNCTs), other Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) partners and governments) on child rights, UNICEF’s *Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies* and cluster approach modalities. As the global cluster lead for nutrition and WASH and co-lead for education with Save the Children Alliance, the Regional Office will cooperate with other regional cluster leaders in increasing awareness of humanitarian partners, especially the UNCTs, on the humanitarian reform and the associated roles and accountabilities.

The CEE/CIS Emergency Team will advocate and closely monitor the implementation of the relevant recommendation outlined in the global ‘Audit Report on the Management of Emergency Preparedness in UNICEF Country Offices’ in the region. Capacity-building activities, especially training workshops and simulation exercises, will be organized for Country Offices on emerging humanitarian issues, corporate policies and inter-agency modalities. To the extent possible, these activities will involve partners, including national governments, NGOs and UN agencies.

**Disaster Risk Reduction (US$ 300,000)**

In the area of disaster risk reduction, the primary focus of the CEE/CIS Regional Office will be to implement the project activities funded under ECHO’s Disaster Preparedness Programme in Central Asia. Depending on the availability of additional funds that could cover countries outside of the Central Asia subregion, the Regional Office will support risk reduction activities in some of the most disaster-prone countries in the region, especially Turkey. Building on the work carried out in 2008, the Regional Office will continue to engage with UN/ISDR and UNDP/BCPR in providing guidance on the integration of risk reduction issues into the regular Country Programme, including through the organization of training events for UNCTs. Within UNICEF, links will be established with the new risk reduction focal point in the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) in developing and/or providing policy guidance as well as establishing links with key players in disaster risk reduction.
Among the Central Asian countries, it is in Tajikistan where the changing nature and growing complexity of humanitarian crises has been more evident today than ever before. The interlocking and concurrent shocks combined with longer-term drivers have exposed populations in situations of acute vulnerability. The UNICEF-assisted programme, which covers responses in health and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene, seeks to reach out to about 1 million children under age five, particularly vulnerable groups of children and their families from rural areas. The Country Programme will also cover about 80,000 pregnant women in remote and hard-to-reach areas of Khatlon oblast.

### Summary of UNICEF Emergency Needs for 2009*

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<th>Sector</th>
<th>US$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and Nutrition</td>
<td>800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total**</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
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1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN

A landlocked country, Tajikistan is the poorest of the former Soviet republics and one of the poorest countries in the world. Mostly mountainous, only about 10 per cent of its land is suitable for cultivation making access to basic services difficult. Aside from the ravages of the civil war, the country has experienced a number of major disasters over the last 10 years, including earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts and, more recently, a severe winter emergency. The average annual frequency of disasters routinely reaches over 100 and sometimes 200 per year in the country. Seventy per cent of the population live in rural areas, many of which are very remote. This has a significant impact on the delivery of basic services.

In late 2007/early 2008, Tajikistan was hard hit by severe cold winter with heavy snowfall when night temperature dropped as low as -25°C. The situation worsened due to the acute shortage of power seriously disrupting the functioning of the essential public services. For instance, many water supply systems were broken, school attendance rates were very low and some schools were unofficially closed, and hospitals were left without essential supply of water, heating and lighting.

Losses of crops and seeds as well as livestock have negatively impacted the livelihood of marginal populations, especially those heavily reliant on agriculture and farm products. Unusual dry spells during the rainy season (March–May) and locust invasion in April have also adversely affected the traditional agriculture on which most people rely. Results from the Emergency Food Security Assessment conducted in April–May 2008 indicated that some 1.68 million people are food insecure who would require food assistance.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2008

By promptly using the in-country stock of emergency supplies, UNICEF was among the first agencies to respond immediately to the humanitarian needs of the affected population. It mainly focused on the priority areas of health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and child protection.

With support from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Government of Italy, UNICEF helped in preventing newborn and child deaths by timely provision of baby warmers, incubators, hygiene materials and over 1,100 primary health-care kits to the affected areas. UNICEF used the CERF to accelerate the prevention of acute respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases (ARI/DD) and supported the Ministry of Health integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) centre and primary health-care workers. The IMCI centre was supported in establishing mobile teams and in conducting orientation workshops at regional and district levels. Basic manuals on management of ARI/DD with the new protocols of the World Health Organization (WHO) were also provided to primary health-care workers. The Government of Estonia’s contribution helped in building capacities of parents and communities in priority districts to provide early intervention and psychosocial stimulation to infants and young children during emergencies.

In the area of child protection and with assistance from the Governments of Netherlands and Italy, close to 10,000 children based in residential care institutions were provided immediate lifesaving emergency items. The aid included the delivery of high protein biscuits, kerosene stoves, jerrycans, biscuits, bars of soap, and generators. In education, schools and child institutions were supported in procuring heating materials, including generators and coal.

In the WASH sector, the UNICEF-assisted campaign to warn 1 million urban residents about the risks of poor water quality prevented a potential disease outbreak. While the UN Development Programme (UNDP) was responsible for increasing the supply of water through a combination of system repairs and water trucking, UNICEF distributed water purification tablets, water containers and other water-related supplies. With support from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), the Government of Norway and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), UNICEF also facilitated small- and medium-scale rehabilitation of rural water supply systems for 70,000 people (approximately 45,000 women and children) from seven communities in the affected areas.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2009

**Coordination and Partnership**

The humanitarian community in Tajikistan is organized under the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT), which includes UN agencies, NGOs and Government. REACT is divided into five sectoral groups as follows: food security; non-food items and shelter; health; water and sanitation; and education.

**Linkages of HAR with the Regular Programme**

The Programme of Cooperation focuses on lifesaving interventions and improving the quality and access to basic services. Through upstream policy work, the cooperation works jointly with other donors and government partners in addressing systemic issues that will likely affect children and women in emergencies.

The planned humanitarian action for 2009 seeks to reach about 100,000 children under age five, particularly vulnerable groups of children and their families from rural areas in Khatlon and Rayon Republican Subordination regions as well as 80,000 pregnant women in remote and hard-to-reach areas of Khatlon oblast. It intends to implement lifesaving interventions to be carried out immediately and essential activities that may be added once an initial response is established.

**Health and Nutrition (US$ 800,000)**

For 2009, the goal is to minimize the impact of combined extreme weather conditions, energy shortage and the current national food insecurity on the health and nutritional status of women and children, especially children under age five. UNICEF will undertake the following key activities:

- Supply 600 health kits to primary health-care centres in the affected areas, especially targeting those centres that are unable to cope with the increased number of emergency patients due to available drugs and medical supplies, benefiting about 1.8 million residents in Khatlon and Rayon Republican Subordination regions;
- Promote exclusive breastfeeding practices and complementary feeding, including counselling of mothers on early childcare and stimulation, benefiting 90,000 pregnant/lactating women;
- Distribute lifesaving and critical relief supplies, such as baby warmers, baby blankets and primary health kits, to about 85,000 newborn babies;
- Distribute the new formula of oral rehydration salts (ORS) to almost 1 million children under age five;
- Ensure that women and girls have access to health services.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (US$ 500,000)**

For 2009, the overall goal is to ensure that children and women have access to safe water and sanitation facilities through the implementation of the following key activities:

- Lead the WASH sector group for a coordinated emergency response;
- Maintain the steady and quality supply of water and storage for 10,000 households in urban and rural areas, with special attention to hospitals, schools and mass care facilities;
- Distribute water containers, water purification tablets, chlorine lime and soap to 10,000 households;
- Where possible, rehabilitate existing water supply and sanitation facilities;
- Organize a communication campaign for hygiene promotion and reach out to about 500,000 people;
- Provide hygiene materials, including soap, buckets and educational materials containing hygiene messages in local languages.

**Education (US$ 500,000)**

As potential extreme weather condition emergency may affect the ability of children to attend school, UNICEF plans to implement the following key interventions:

- Lead the education sector coordination together with Save the Children Alliance;
- Support insulation of doors and windows and provide heating stoves to about 50 affected schools;
Advocate for the temporary suspension of classes during severe winter days and support catch-up programmes;

With the health and nutrition team and partners, support activities related to early childhood development (ECD) in emergencies.

**Child Protection (US$ 200,000)**

For 2009, the overall goal is to address the increased vulnerability of children, especially those with special protection needs, in the event of an emergency, through the following key activities:

- Identify and provide assistance to children and women in need of special protection (monitoring shall be carried out by UNICEF and the National Commission on Child Rights on the appropriate distribution and use of supplies);
- Provide psychosocial support to about 500 children in closed type institutions;
- Support 9,341 children without family or institutional care in receiving basic survival/developmental assistance, with attention to the most vulnerable.