

unicef  | for every child

# UNICEF SUPPLY STRATEGY

2026  
29



Securing access to essential supplies and services is central to UNICEF's mission to accelerate progress for children and advance the full realization of their rights. With a programmatic presence in more than 190 countries and territories, and unique expertise in end-to-end supply chains, UNICEF leverages its global scale and local presence to reach children and communities with essential supplies and services, even in the most challenging contexts.

As the largest end-to-end supply chain agency in the United Nations system, and through established partnerships with industry and pooled procurement arrangements, UNICEF achieves economies of scale, increases operational efficiencies, improves product availability, and shapes markets to better meet the needs of children. UNICEF's Supply Division leads this global effort, working hand-in-hand with the organization's supply and logistics staff - referred to collectively as 'UNICEF Supply'.

This document outlines UNICEF's strategy to use its supply chain capabilities to accelerate progress for children from 2026 to 2029. The Supply Strategy underpins the global UNICEF Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan builds on UNICEF's comparative advantage to accelerate government-led progress on child survival and development, learning and skills, freedom from poverty, protection from violence, and resilience in the face of climate and environmental risks. By securing timely, efficient, and equitable access to essential supplies and services for children, the UNICEF Supply Strategy directly contributes to the five impact result areas of the Strategic Plan. Successful execution of this supply strategy will rely on close collaboration with public and private sector partners, unlocking – at scale – financing, funding, influence, expertise and other partner assets.

UNICEF will collaborate with its sister United Nations agencies to pursue an integrated approach to agency supply chains, thus enabling the United Nations to deliver more coherently together. This approach – whereby a core group of agencies with the appropriate capabilities and track records deliver key services on behalf of others – will enable global supply chains to achieve a new level of operating agility, service quality and significant cost savings. Above all, its benefits will be felt by the people that are supported with supplies and services across the world.

UNICEF achieves economies of scale, increases operational efficiencies, improves product availability, and shapes markets to better meet the needs of children.



# Global context

The UNICEF Supply Strategy responds to significant shifts in the global context. Donor priorities are continuing to evolve in response to geopolitical upheaval, domestic politics and national security concerns. At the same time, humanitarian crises are growing in size, frequency, and complexity, and driving increased, urgent demand for lifesaving supplies.

Global economic shocks have disrupted trade routes, increased transportation costs, and triggered shifts in sourcing strategies. The erosion of multilateral cooperation makes it harder to coordinate responses, sustain supply pipelines, and guarantee predictable access for those most in need. Climate change further compounds the complexity of supply operations, with extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and resource scarcity disrupting transport corridors and increasing the frequency of humanitarian crises.

These challenges present an imperative to reshape supply systems for the future, to be more agile, local, resilient, and focused. By adapting supply chains, UNICEF can respond to today's volatility and be a catalyst for inclusive and resilient development in support of children and their communities across the world.

UNICEF Supply is mobilising its efforts where it has the greatest comparative advantage, complementing the work of partners. This includes using our purchasing power and market influence, as the largest procurement agency in the United Nations; in humanitarian preparedness and response, taking advantage of UNICEF's well-established presence in more than 190 countries and territories, together with strong relationships with governments and partners; and supply chain optimization, as the principal end-to-end supply chain organization in the United Nations.

## RESULT AREA 1

# Strategic procurement and delivery

UNICEF's strategic procurement – including quality assurance, market shaping, and product innovation – helps ensure that supplies are affordable, available, and relevant to the needs of children across diverse contexts while meeting international standards of quality.

In the current context, a more strategic and adaptive approach to procurement is essential to sustain impact at scale. UNICEF Supply will focus its product portfolios around priority areas that deliver the greatest value for children, while maintaining the agility to adapt as contexts evolve. These are immunization; nutrition and child development; maternal, newborn, and child survival; and climate, infrastructure, and energy.

## KEY INTERVENTIONS

**ENHANCE AFFORDABILITY** for example by using UNICEF's purchasing power to negotiate best prices, diversifying the supplier base to increase competition and promoting cost-effective solutions.

**ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLIES** through robust planning, forecasting, logistics management and in-country monitoring, so that essential supplies and services reach children when they need them most.

Make sure that **PRODUCTS ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE**, meeting the unique needs of children in different contexts and situations.

Ensure that **SUPPLIES MEET INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS** and regulatory requirements by working in close collaboration with suppliers.

A health worker prepares to vaccinate a child at the UNICEF-supported mobile clinic in Fatasha village located in West Omdurman near North Kordofan, Sudan.  
© UNICEF/UNI894765/Elfatih



## RESULT AREA 2

# Supply preparedness and response in humanitarian and fragile contexts

In humanitarian and fragile contexts, children are consistently among the most vulnerable, facing heightened risks of malnutrition, disease, and mortality. UNICEF Supply will work to ensure timely and sustained access to lifesaving supplies for children in humanitarian and fragile contexts by strengthening supply and logistics preparedness, response, capacity and coordination.

### KEY INTERVENTIONS

#### **STRENGTHEN SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS PREPAREDNESS**

by continuously adapting the portfolio of emergency supplies – outlined in the Emergency Supply List – to meet evolving humanitarian needs. This includes increasing national and regional procurement and strengthening emergency preparedness planning.

#### **ENHANCE SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS RESPONSE**

by ensuring that critical supplies are delivered quickly and efficiently. This involves minimizing delays that exacerbate crises, reducing logistical bottlenecks, pre-positioning stock, and optimizing delivery and warehousing.

#### **INCREASE SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS CAPACITY**

in emergencies by making skilled surge capacity available and being prepared to scale operations rapidly during emergencies.

#### **ENHANCE THE COORDINATION OF SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS**

by working with partners to align and complement efforts, share knowledge and real-time supply chain information to streamline decision-making, reduce duplication of efforts, and direct resources where they are needed most.

## RESULT AREA 3

# Supply chain optimization

Inefficiencies in the supply chain put children at risk by causing delays, stockouts, increased costs and wastage. UNICEF Supply will seek to optimize supply chains for essential supplies by ensuring that they are resilient, agile, differentiated, and sustainable.

### KEY INTERVENTIONS

**OPTIMIZE UNICEF SUPPLY CHAINS** through continuous investments and improvements that increase efficiency, effectiveness, and agility – including strengthened internal processes and staff capacity.

Support governments to **OPTIMIZE AND BUILD THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS** through the application of supply chain expertise and tools, leveraging internal capacity, partnering with civil society, the private sector, and other United Nations agencies, focusing on last-mile delivery, supporting the use of digital supply chain tools, and coordinating with logistics actors such as freight forwarders, global carriers, and warehousing partners.

At UNICEF's warehouse in Cox's Bazar ahead of Cyclone Mocha, UNICEF was ready to respond swiftly; distributing clean water, therapeutic milk, learning supplies, shelter materials and hygiene essentials. © UNICEF/ UN0841639/Lateef



# CHANGE ACCELERATORS

To enable and accelerate progress towards these results, the Supply Strategy identifies three priority areas of work as change accelerators:

## Financing for supplies and services

When governments lack access to reliable supply financing, stock-outs can occur, disrupting critical services. Predictable and timely financing stabilizes supply chains, keeps delivery schedules on track, and minimizes costs associated with emergency purchases and inefficiencies. As many governments transition from donor-funded models to using their domestic budgets to purchase essential supplies, the need for efficient and resilient systems for sustainable financing has become paramount.

UNICEF Supply will support governments to increase investment in the procurement of essential supplies and services for children by:

### EXPANDING AND LEVERAGING UNICEF SUPPLY FINANCING INSTRUMENTS:

- Expanding the Vaccine Independence Initiative – providing bridge financing to partners to temporarily cover budget delays or financial backstopping for firm contracts with manufacturers to accelerate access to essential health supplies.

UNICEF helps families to access critical infant health services at Al-Sadaqah Hospital in Aden, Yemen. © UNICEF/UNI625683/Hayyan



- Expanding supply matching instruments, such as the Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health Match Fund and the Match Window of the Child Nutrition Fund that leverage and incentivize greater domestic resource allocations to priority commodities by matching 1:1 every dollar a government spends.
- Expanding supply financing facilities - rolling out a framework within which donors can provide grant funding to procure supplies in emergency situations.

#### **STRENGTHENING AND LEVERAGING STRATEGIC INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:**

- Working with global and regional International Financial Institutions and development partners to socialize the strategic benefits of the various supply financing instruments in delivering impact for countries.
- Working with continental and regional bodies, especially on the localization agenda and to explore supply financing linkages.

#### **PROVIDING STRATEGIC COUNTRY SUPPORT FOR SYSTEM STRENGTHENING:**

- Assisting countries to take advantage of supply financing instruments, for example in health budgeting processes.
- Supporting governments to strengthen national supply chains.
- Ensuring UNICEF has the necessary skilled capacity to support system strengthening at the country level.

## Supply chain digitalization

From 2026 to 2029 UNICEF Supply will further focus its work to advance the digitalization of supply chains for children. The aim is to enhance transparency and efficiency, strengthen collaboration with partners along the supply chains, deliver more agile, real-time analytics and scenario planning, and ensure quicker and more effective delivery of essential supplies.

UNICEF Supply will advance the digitalization of supply chains for children by:

#### **REINFORCING TRANSPARENCY AND DATA VISIBILITY BY:**

- Strengthening the usability and availability of supply chain data for informed decision-making.
- Implementing end-to-end monitoring of supply chains for essential supplies for children.
- Working with partners to strengthen collaborative platforms and supply chain intelligence.



Health worker at Papa Health Centre, uses a tablet to access the mSupply app, a vaccine stock management system recently rolled out in Papua New Guinea, supported by a donation from the Government of Japan to UNICEF. © UNICEF/UNI1786305/

#### **FUTURE-PROOFING UNICEF SUPPLY CHAIN SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES BY:**

- Further simplifying and automating supply chain processes, including the adoption and integration of new technologies such as artificial intelligence.
- Further investing in the digitalization of supply chain operations.
- Continuously building skills and capacity in intelligent supply chains.

## **Supply localization**

During the timeframe of this strategy, UNICEF Supply will reinforce its focus on the localization of supply chains for children. Supply localization is a strategic approach to strengthen regional and national production and procurement of supplies and optimize supply chains.

By shifting the planning, implementation and decision-making closer to children, supply localization enhances the resilience, efficiency, and sustainability of end-to-end supply chains. These efforts will support emergency preparedness, economic stability, community resilience, and poverty reduction.

UNICEF Supply will support supply localization by:

**ENCOURAGING INCREASED NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROCUREMENT OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES AND SERVICES IN PROGRAMME COUNTRIES BY:**

- Supporting skills development and capacity building.
- Supporting access to financing for supplies.

**INCREASING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRODUCTION OF ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES IN PROGRAMME COUNTRIES BY:**

- Supporting expanded manufacturing capacity.
- Strengthening standardization and compliance.
- Influencing markets.

**STRENGTHENING END-TO-END NATIONAL AND REGIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS BY:**

- Leveraging partnerships with local stakeholders - particularly agents, wholesalers, and regional networks – to access diverse suppliers, navigate regulations and manage logistics.
- Supporting national governments to optimize third-party logistics, transport networks, and warehouse hub management for greater efficiency and resilience.
- Enhancing digital supply chain tools and building national capacity in data analytics and evidence generation.

20-month-old Laoualy eats ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) with the help of his grandmother, Sahoura, in the intensive nutritional recovery centre at Maradi Hospital, where he is being treated for malnutrition. © UNICEF/ UN0831359/Soumaila



# Sustainability

With over one billion children at high risk from climate and environmental disasters according to the children's climate risk index, sustainability is a foundational principle of the UNICEF Supply Strategy.

UNICEF Supply will accelerate work to reduce the organization's environmental footprint and advocate for its global network of partners and suppliers to do the same, in line with international sustainability and climate change agreements. UNICEF Supply will strengthen sustainable procurement, supply localization and market shaping efforts to drive environmental, economic, and social sustainability of supply chains. Key indicators will be used to measure progress on this front.

A proud moment. A team from the Ghana Health Service and UNICEF celebrate a brave student who has just conquered her fear of injection and received the HPV vaccine.  
© UNICEF/UNI885441/Ademuyiwa





La Yone, an 11-year-old Grade 5 student and friends at Basic Education Middle School Nan Kwat (2) in Myitkyina Township, Myanmar  
© UNICEF/UNI854081/Htet

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),  
Supply Division, December 2025

Cover photo: © UNICEF/UNI810645/Dawod

**UNICEF Supply Division**

Oceanvej 10-12  
2150 Nordhavn Copenhagen,  
Denmark

Telephone: +(45) 45 33 55 00  
Email: [supply@unicef.org](mailto:supply@unicef.org)

 [unicef.org/supply](https://unicef.org/supply)

 [@unicefsupply](https://www.instagram.com/unicefsupply)

 [/unicefsupply](https://www.linkedin.com/company/unicefsupply)