REGIONAL CALL TO ACTION TO support the children of the Sahel
The central Sahel region is home to one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises globally in one of the most vulnerable and climate change impacted regions in Africa. Yet, it is amongst the most un-talked about and un-supported humanitarian crises in the world. The surge in armed conflict across the central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) is having a devastating impact on children’s survival, protection, education and development, and has already displaced 2.9 million people both internally and across borders. Conflict and hostilities are threatening lives and livelihoods, increasing human rights violations, disrupting access to health, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and education services, depriving violence-affected communities’ access to vital services, and jeopardising social cohesion. More than 10.1 million children are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, with nearly a million children under 5 facing severe wasting.

Even worse, the insecurity is now spreading south to previously unaffected countries. Under the radar, the crisis is extending over borders at an alarming rate to coastal countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo). Now is the chance to act to strengthen communities before it becomes too late.

1. 2022 Humanitarian Response Plans for the Central Sahel Countries
The central Sahel crisis is driven by a series of complex but interlocking causes. The impacts of climate change, conflict and political insecurity are multiplying existing levels of extreme poverty and a lack of sustainable development opportunities. Food insecurity is affecting millions of families across these eight countries: **6.3 million children under the age of five including pregnant and lactating women are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition this year alone**, with the 2021 rainfall season across the whole of the Sahel well below average, making the year one of the worst for farming in a decade. Conflict in Ukraine has in turn combined with global trends to create spiralling food costs and fertilizer prices, heavily impacting communities already facing multiple deprivations and poverty. The number of reported security incidents in the central Sahel has increased sixteen-fold between 2015 and 2021. The violence has led to massive population displacements and drastically limited access to basic social services. Almost 5,000 schools across the central Sahel have either been obliged to close down or are unable to function. Both girls and boys are now at much greater risk. Girls are much more likely to become victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence. Boys, who account for the majority of verified cases of recruitment and exploitation by armed forces and non-state armed groups, are at much greater risk of being killed or maimed, especially when forced into fighting roles.

UNICEF and partners are calling for international attention and investment so that we can continue to scale up our lifesaving and multi-sectoral services to children and families whilst building resilience support in the five coastal countries where the security crisis is rapidly growing.
UNICEF urgently requires $355.2 million for lifesaving, cross-dimensional response activities and resilience building support to reflect the growing needs across the region.

Without emergency funding, children will be left to face some of the highest levels of malnutrition we have ever seen in this region. They will face the poorest of hygiene and sanitation conditions, some of the harshest forms of child violence and abuses, and they will have little chance of learning. In the midst of conflict and instability, these are children who have already seen things in their life that no child should see. Systems on the ground cannot cope and without this injection of funding, there is little hope that UNICEF and our partners will be able to change the situation facing over 10 million children and their families.

In spite of the escalating emergency, the Sahel is a region of immense potential which UNICEF and partners need to help protect and help maximise for local communities. It has vast farmlands, precious minerals and valuable sources of renewable energy. With more than two thirds of the population below the age of 25, there is a great opportunity to enable children and young people to be heard and to be the agents of change for an improved Africa for future generations.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!
The Sahel in crisis

Since 2021, humanitarian needs rose from 13.2 million to 14.7 million people in need across the Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) increase in a single year. However, the Sahel is more than a humanitarian crisis. It is a multi-faceted crisis in the areas of protection, education, nutrition, socio-economic and community systems, which has been exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic and Ukraine-Russia war which has diverted funds, attention and affected prices here and everywhere.

It is a WASH crisis…

Water scarcity is becoming a driver of conflict in the region

Attacks and chronic instability has deprived hundreds of thousands of people from adequately accessing clean water

Some 7.4 million people are water insecure today

It is a nutrition crisis…

16 million people will face food insecurity in 2022, the highest caseload recorded since 2014

Nearly 1 million children are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition in Central Sahel this year

Acute food insecurity in West Africa is up 40% this year compared with 2021 and over 400,000 children are already suffering from severe acute malnutrition

It is a protection crisis

6 million children, particularly girls, are in need of protection from violence, abuse and exploitation, including sexual exploitation or child marriage.

In 2022, over 3.2 million children will need protection

In 2021, grave violations against children have increased by 58% compared to 2020

Over 50% of young women in the Sahel married during their childhood; levels are highest in Central Sahel, where seven in ten young women were child brides

It is an education crisis…

Over 5,000 schools are forcibly closed due to attacks and threats of violence

Increased attacks on education during 2020 and 2021 disrupted the education of almost one million learners in the Central Sahel region

More than 9 million children and adolescents are out of school

The life of a child kept out of school is a tragedy of unfulfilled potential and lost opportunity


SAHEL EMERGENCY | Regional call to action
It is a security crisis…

In July 2022 over 2.9 million were displaced representing a 23% increase in a single year.

The number of reported security incidents have increased sixteen-fold between 2015 and 2021.

The Central Sahel has also become one of the most dangerous places for humanitarian workers, with Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso accounting for one-third of all abductions of aid workers in the world in 2020.

In the coastal countries, the predicted conflict spill over from the Central Sahel crisis has become a reality, particularly in Benin and Côte d’Ivoire, which recorded dozens of attacks over the past years. In the last six months, Togo has also seen two major attacks on security forces in the northern region.

Ghana and possibly Guinea are expected to be in a similar situation within the next two years if resilience building and support interventions are not funded fast.
UNICEF is on the ground with a large field presence, responding always to save lives. UNICEF’s established regional footprint in the Sahel is the largest of any UN agency. We are there before crises strike and stay in place long after the news crews have left. We deliver a continuum of support that addresses not just the initial shocks, but each and every long-term impact. Right now we have over 1,000 UNICEF field specialists working in the three central Sahel countries and the five coastal countries. These offices support children wherever they are.

UNICEF is scaling-up resilience programming, with an emphasis on risk-informed programming and multi-sectoral programming. Since 2020, at least 2 million vulnerable people across Mali and Niger (as well as Mauritania) have accessed essential social services, including during times of shocks and stress.

Navigating complex political situations in the Sahel, with a focus on reaching every child, UNICEF has been protecting children, keeping them learning, and supporting their health and nutrition across worsening and complex crises. Leveraging the lessons learned from the central Sahel response, since 2019, UNICEF offices in the coastal countries have also taken actions to mitigate the effects of the Sahel spillover on children and their families. UNICEF invested into training and capacity-building to conduct risk analysis, monitor changes in the security situation, step up preparedness, and adapt regular country programmes to be more risk informed.

As of December 2021, UNICEF teams across the eight affected countries had reached:

- **419,000** children with psychosocial support, including access to child-friendly spaces;
- **667,000** children with access to formal or non-formal education;
- **1,040,000** children vaccinated against measles;
- **737,000** children aged 6–59 months with SAM admitted for treatment;
UNICEF’S RESPONSE
AND PLANNED TARGETS FOR 2022

**Burkina Faso** - to reach 2.5 million people with multi-sectoral humanitarian services, including over 1 million children

**Guinea** - reach 5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Guinea, including 4.4 million children

**Côte d’Ivoire** - to provide lifesaving support services to 768,256 people, including 384,128 children and to strengthen system and community resilience, to cope with the spillover crisis in the north-eastern regions

**Ghana** - to strengthen the resilience of 200 communities and related institutions at risk for shocks and disruptions of basic and social services across 20 districts in three spill-over regions

**Mali** - target to reach 2.2 million children in 2022 with lifesaving services

**Niger** - to provide life-saving, multi-sectoral assistance to 1.1 million vulnerable children and women affected by humanitarian crises with a focus in the areas of nutrition, education and water, sanitation and hygiene

**Benin** - to support 2.3 million at-risk people, including 1.1 million girls and women, and a total of 1 million children in twelve communes bordering Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria.

**Togo** - To support 773,000 at-risk people, including 374,900 children in the five most affected spill-over zones and build resilience of systems and communities in the face of a growing security crisis.

SAHEL EMERGENCY | Regional call to action
To support 2.3 million at-risk people, including 1.1 million girls and women, and a total of 1 million children in twelve communes bordering Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria.

**Need:**

According to UNICEF estimates, there are currently more than **2.3 million people** — mainly children, girls and women — considered at risk in Northern Benin, particularly in border areas.

In the three departments bordering Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria, namely Alibori, Atacora and Borgou, there is clear evidence of conflict spill over. More than 20 attacks against security forces and rangers took place since the end of 2021.

Non-state armed groups (NSAG) from the Central Sahel are expanding their areas of operation and influence here, and they are doing so in the three departments with the lowest development indicators, recurrent flooding and disease outbreaks (polio, cholera, Lassa fever).

**The response includes:**

In the three targeted departments, UNICEF and its partners are providing a holistic package of interventions, services and care for children and their families in the field of education, health, nutrition and child protection including cash transfers for vulnerable families, life-skills education on social cohesion, construction of WASH infrastructures, socioeconomic integration for unemployed youth, and policy support to local authorities to develop response plans.

**Activities include**

- **Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene in communities:** quick impact basic service infrastructure (water points, repair of schools and health facilities)
- **Promoting key family practices to prevent malnutrition:** community support groups created, including women support groups, to share key information to parents on children’s health and wellbeing;
- **Reinforcing community dialogue to promote social cohesion:** inter-generational dialogues and participatory radio debates organized in the community to discuss social cohesion; children and youth trained on life skills and peace-building as peer educators;
- **Developing community warning and reporting systems to prevent violence against children:** local watchdog committees put in place at village level to report violence against children;
- **Empowering youth as positive actors of change:** young people trained as community first responders to support community sustainable response capacity and young people leading mass campaigns to promote social cohesion and access to social services.
- **Ensuring access to education despite shocks:** alternatives developed, such as radio education programmes, to ensure continuity of education in case of schools closure;
- **Creating incentives for families to keep children in schools, girls in particular:** unconditional cash transfers provided to families of girls enrolled in school and school kits donated to children to reduce the costs of education for vulnerable families;
- **Providing necessary care and support to victims of violence, including gender-based violence:** social workers and facilitators trained
- **Creating alternative pathways for out-of-school and/or unemployed youth:** training and seed funding provided to youth to launch their business in sectors where opportunities exist or will arise.
To reach 2.5 million people with multi-sectoral humanitarian services, including over 1 million children

The military takeover which occurred in Burkina Faso on 24 January 2022 has led to political instability and has further exacerbated existing structural issues (weak governance, poverty, demographic pressure), alongside ongoing emergency crises (conflict, climate change, COVID-19 pandemic).

Due to the growing armed violence[1], it is increasingly difficult and costly to reach communities in need of humanitarian assistance.

In Burkina Faso, 4.7 million people need humanitarian assistance. 2.8 million people are in urgent need of access to WASH services and 1.1 million children lack access to education.

To date, nearly 2 million people have fled their homes, of which more than 1 million children (61.3 per cent) children[2].

The response includes:

- UNICEF will continue to scale up the response by intensifying existing partnerships with community-based platforms, while strengthening engagement with young people to support social cohesion and resilience.

- 35,000 displaced and host communities, including people with disabilities, supported with essential household items to cover their urgent needs

- 152,510 children to be admitted for treatment for severe acute malnutrition

- 755,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water and 950,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items)

- 600,000 children/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support

- 10,000 households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers

- 650,154 children accessing educational services

- 2,500,000 to be people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions

- 60,000 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions

- 650,154 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning

- 214,551 children receiving individual learning materials

[1] In 2021, an estimated 673 security incidents occurred causing 1007 death of civilians. In 2022, there is a sharp increase in armed violence where up to end of June, 949 security incidents occurred and 1172 death of civilians. Source: UNICEF.

Côte d’Ivoire

To provide lifesaving support services to 846,262 people, including 404,323 children and to strengthen system and community resilience, to cope with the spillover crisis in the north-eastern regions.

Need:
The growing risk of spillover of conflict and armed violence from the neighbouring Central Sahel countries highlight the need to consolidate emergency preparedness capacity in the country, while continuing to invest into systems strengthening for the delivery of essential services.

As of May 2022, 6,433 refugees from Burkina Faso (1,054 men, 1,544 women, and 3,834 children) have been displaced in the border areas and are currently living with host communities, placing additional strain on an already fragile network of basic social services.

The weak capacity of health facilities in terms of community-based surveillance, early warning system and adequate care contributes to the recurrent threat of disease outbreaks as measles, polio, meningitis and Ebola.

The response includes:
- 10,000 displaced and host communities, including people with disabilities, to be supported with essential household items to cover their urgent needs
- 2,786 children to be admitted for treatment for severe acute malnutrition
- 7,104 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water and 10,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items)
- 10,000 children accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- 146,000 children accessing educational services and 804 schools implementing safe school protocols
- 768,256 to be people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions
- 500 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention

Ghana

To strengthen the resilience of 200 communities and related institutions at risk for shocks and disruptions of basic and social services across 20 districts in three spill-over regions.

Need:
Ghana’s northern regions account for 44% of the nation as population that live under the poverty line. Around 9.4% of householders in the spillover region rely on unprotected wells for drinking water compared to 3.4% nationally.

Over 1,000 new migrants have been recorded within districts bordering with Burkina Faso.

The response includes:
- Increased Access to social and basic services: Children, adolescents, youth, and women in target areas have increased and sustainable access to social and basic services for their survival, development, and transformation, resulting in decreased vulnerability in border communities.
- Improved Community Inclusion and Cohesion: Migratory and North-Ghanaian communities including children, adolescent and youth have improved livelihood conditions, resulting in an improved capacity of communities to manage misinformation and resolve conflict peacefully, reduce harmful practices against children and adolescents, and increase youth participation. Ultimately, this strategy will result in fewer land disputes, increased school attendance, and improved inclusion and cohesion among border communities.
- Increased Security Among Border Communities: Communities are equipped and empowered to prevent the effects of shocks and stresses on systems, households, and individuals, and manage residual risks, with an improved access to information and increased engagement with local planning, resulting in increased security among border communities.
Guinea

Reach 8.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Guinea, including 6.7 million children

Need:
Guinea experienced a coup d’état on September 5th, 2021, while already in a difficult political context, and now at the risk of possible sanctions by ECOWAS.

The current humanitarian situation is further exacerbated by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19. The weak capacity of health facilities in terms of community-based surveillance, early warning system and adequate care contributes to the recurrent threat of disease outbreaks as measles, polio, meningitis, yellow fever, Ebola virus disease, Lassa fever, and Marburg.

The growing risk of spillover of conflict and armed violence from the neighboring Central Sahel countries highlight the need to maintain a robust emergency readiness capacity in the country, while continuing to invest into systems strengthening for the delivery of essential services.

The response includes:
The 3 strategic humanitarian response strategies in Guinea are to support the continuity of essential services and access to social protection, to enhance community engagement and to strengthen emergency preparedness.

To ensure the continuity of health and immunization services through community-based surveillance, vaccination, strengthening laboratory capacity, procurement of essential medicines and critical pharmaceutical supplies, and support for mobile clinics in remote areas.

UNICEF will focus on early detection and adequate care for children with severe acute malnutrition by strengthening its presence and operational support to health centers and community platforms.

UNICEF will focus on supporting the continuity of learning in safe environments, facilitating access to learning materials, and providing WASH services, quality emergency supplies and consumables in schools and early learning centers.

Building on good practices and lessons learned, UNICEF will also consider and strengthen distance learning and digital platforms approaches depending on COVID-19 dynamics in the country.

UNICEF will support violence prevention services for children and women, focusing on mental health, psychosocial support and gender-based violence, including programmes for the empowerment of women and adolescents.
Mali

Target to reach 2.2 million children in 2022 with lifesaving services

**Need:**

7.5 million – one in three Malians – need humanitarian assistance. Grave violations of children’s rights are pervasive and displacement remains a major concern with 370,548 people internally displaced.

**The response includes:**

- 197,671 children to be admitted for treatment for severe acute malnutrition
- 200,000 children to be vaccinated against measles and 352,064 children aged 6 to 59 months to be vaccinated against polio
- 482,000 people to be accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water and 390,000 people to be reached with critical WASH supplies
- 1,200 unaccompanied and separated children accessing family-based care or a suitable alternative
- 372,733 children/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support

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Niger

To provide life-saving, multi-sectoral assistance to 1.1 million vulnerable children and women affected by humanitarian crises with a focus in the areas of nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene

**Need:**

Conflict, displacement, malnutrition, recurrent disease epidemics, cyclical floods and droughts in Niger have placed more than 3.8 million people, including 2.1 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance, in a context characterized by deep structural challenges and the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19.

Many of those in need are located in hard-to-reach areas with limited access, which remains a major bottleneck to the delivery of assistance.

Insecurity is spreading at a rapid pace in Niger, with heightened incidence of grave violations against children.

**The response includes:**

- 492,000 children to be admitted for treatment for severe acute malnutrition
- 237,375 people to be accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking and domestic needs
- 378,000 women and children to be accessing gender-based violence mitigation, prevention, response
- 171,500 displaced persons and people affected by natural disasters provided with essential household items
- 246,466 people to be engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions
- 152,118 children to be vaccinated against measles
- 500,000 people to be reached with critical WASH supplies
To support 773,000 at-risk people, including 374,900 children in the five most affected prefectures of the Savannah region and build resilience of systems and communities in the face of a growing security crisis.

**Need:**

As of 29 July 2022, 1,868 people from Burkina have been displaced in the spillover zones and are currently living with host communities and 1,562 internally displaced people are placing additional strain on an already fragile network of basic social services.

The spillover areas have consistently scored lowest in terms of infant and child mortality, vaccination coverage, access to water, child nutrition, school enrolment and presents the highest level of monetary poverty (65 percent against a national average of 45).

**The response includes:**

Strengthen the capacities of community health workers on the management of childhood illnesses at community level, essential family practices and child-friendly communities to ensure the implementation of community health activities in the 7 health districts of the region.

Equip 33 health facilities with essential medical materials.

Provide community health workers to treat more than 135,000 children.

Provide 100 Gen Expert kits for early screening of children and early ARV treatment

Strengthen the capacity of 25 heads of health facilities on screening strategies and care for people living with HIV, including children in humanitarian situations

Organize 10 community dialogues in 10 communities with strong resistance to vaccination, including displaced communities, on the continuity of vaccination services

Construct and rehabilitate 40 boreholes to provide access to safe, potable water in vulnerable host communities and distribute 93,341 hygiene kits with buckets, soap, chlore and menstrual hygiene kits to displaced population.

Provide Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods to 3,588 malnourished children

Improve access to gender-based violence prevention and response services to more than 250 vulnerable children and women and expand the child protection national helpline for Psychosocial support.

Train more than 3,500 people on child rights and prevention of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation

Provide cash transfers (unconditional) to 1,000 families among displaced persons (from Burkina Faso and IDPs) and community hosts to allow them to facilitate access to social services, ensure nutritional needs and quality education is provided for their children.

Rehabilitate and improve 43 schools and provide learning materials to 12,960 children
UNICEF’s track record and regional results until now, thanks to our partners of the Sahel

UNICEF is on the ground with a large field presence, responding always to save lives. UNICEF’s established regional footprint in the Sahel is the largest of any UN agency. We are there before crises strike and stay in place long after the news crews have left.

We deliver a continuum of support that addresses not just the initial shocks, but each and every long-term impact. Right now we have over 1,000 UNICEF field specialists working in the three central Sahel countries and the five coastal

UNICEF is scaling-up resilience programming, with an emphasis on risk-informed programming and multi-sectoral programming. Since 2020, at least 2 million vulnerable people across Mali and Niger (as well as Mauritania) have accessed essential social services, including during times of shocks and stress.

Navigating complex political situations in the Sahel, with a focus on reaching every child, UNICEF has been protecting children, keeping them learning, and supporting their health and nutrition across worsening and complex crises. Leveraging the lessons learned from the central Sahel response, since 2019, UNICEF offices in the coastal countries have also taken actions to mitigate the effects of the Sahel spillover on children and their families. UNICEF invested into training and capacity-building to conduct risk analysis, monitor changes in the security situation, step up preparedness, and adapt regular country programmes to be more risk informed.
UNICEF’s Resilience response work in the Spill-over Coastal Countries

Violence in the Sahel and beyond has not just displaced communities, it has also severely crippled basic services with attacks on schools, hospitals, markets, and water infrastructure.

A common strategy by non-state actors is to attack state authority notably through social services. Attacks on education are particularly egregious as with schools under threat, pupils withdraw and engage in often risky informal revenue generating activities and are at a higher risk of associations with violent groups, a trend well documented in Mali and Burkina Faso by the International Center for Counter Terrorism. UNICEF’s commitment to its mandate, ensuring that the services that allow children and their families to enact their basic human rights remain available regardless of the authority over a given population and meeting common international norms as outlined in UNICEF’s Core Commitment for Children document.

It is while communities are still accessible and prior to increased shocks that UNICEF’s strategy aims to build the capacity of local actors, the private sector and leaders alongside decentralised government partners to strengthen, maintain and re-build essential services where access to the affected population will be challenged in a manner that support their resilience to future stresses.

The establishment and strengthening of community-based Early Warning Systems through local action groups is a mechanism that needs to be implemented in the community resilience building blocks. With this mechanism, communities learn to monitor, alert, and respond to events or situations that could cause crisis or stresses, thus empowering them to cope with such shocks. They hence become real actors engaged in the scanning and protection of their own environment and not mere observers and subjects of external interventions. The implementation of the community-based early warning system not only helps protect lives and livelihoods but is also an investment for the future that makes it possible to involve local officials and communities in the prevention and local management of humanitarian crises.

The five coastal countries - Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo - have been identified as priority countries for emergency preparedness against the spill over risk and in need to strengthen their resilience programming in the most vulnerable northern areas of the country. The program will look at these countries and the interlinkage between issues such as malnutrition, epidemics, social cohesion, WASH, child protection and education. UNICEF will build on existing programs and build on opportunities for partnering with other UN agencies and partners.
Output 1:

Analyze & Prevent

A common sub-regional threat understanding informs response planning, early warning and early response.

UNICEF will coordinate a joint mechanism allowing the sharing of information, analysis and predictions, to support a common threat understanding and a shared basis for response planning and early warning of population displacement. For each country, community level monitoring mechanisms will be established to measure increasing risks to access to basic services and the protective environment of children and their families. Key activities include:

Community feedback loop:
Community-Based Early warning system will be established. Communities will have a focal point within local authority structures where they can communicate alerts and initiate responses before and in times of stress; Local authorities will have a mechanism in place to ensure timely responses to communities’ alerts.

Collective early warning system:
UNICEF country offices will engage with implementing partners and the humanitarian and development community to develop stress indicators that are collected on a regular basis. A regional analysis of common threats will be conducted and updated every two months.

Output 2

Manage

Situations of shocks and stresses are managed through early actions and in ways that support social and economic development

Community actors and relevant local and regional authorities will be supported in their coordination roles and responsibilities during crises, ensuring that they remain in the driver seat.

UNICEF will develop response agreements with community based capacitated local actors, including young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women, providing a basic localized social services package.

Quick impact basic service infrastructure (water points, repair of schools and health facilities) coupled with community training on maintenance and supply chain management will support the rapid absorption of shocks and continuity of delivery by government services.
Adapt & learn

Government systems and community platforms’ planning, decision-making and implementation processes adapt to changes allowing to deliver adaptive services.

**Institutions and Communities use the findings** from their participatory assessments to feed into community planning, decision-making and implementation processes. Municipalities inform local development plans using consolidated findings from their communities.

**Early action procedures are developed**, based on country appropriate stress indicators, monitored for fluctuations of access to services (education, water, and health) as well as public unrest. The objective is to provide an easy referenced “stress thermometer” to better adjust programme and sector approaches if alerts are sent (e.g. children dropping out of school, access to health facilities, maintenance of water infrastructure and public safety indicators).

**Sustainable response capacity is built where the stress occurs**: Community first responders are trained, equipped and supported with integrated approaches in specific sectors using existing community platforms - community water management committees, schools as agents of community preparedness, young people themselves in the communities and community based rapid assessment and information management teams, community nutrition groups, and community health teams.

**UNICEF will support the government**, institutions and communities to sustain the adaptivity of the systems through governments’ plans and budget allocated.

**UNICEF will take the opportunity of a multi-country programming** to facilitate cross-border information and knowledge exchange between the coastal countries and with the Central Sahel countries.
Investing in the preparedness and adaptation capacities of the five coastal countries now, will yield qualitative benefits for families and government systems, and for the humanitarian at-risk communities of Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo.

It is also expected to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness of humanitarian response when shocks will hit.

A UNICEF-WFP co-led study has demonstrated in 2015 the impact of early preparedness investments on eventual humanitarian response:

All UNICEF and WFP emergency preparedness investments examined in Chad, Madagascar and Pakistan were found to save significant time and/or costs in the event of an emergency.

64% of investments saved both costs and time.

$5.6 million was invested in the 49 preparedness activities examined. These interventions saved a total of $12 million toward future humanitarian response for a net savings of $6.4 million.

93% of preparedness investments examined saved time toward humanitarian response – no investment examined slowed down humanitarian response.

Preparedness interventions can speed response time by 2 to 50 days or on average more than one week.
COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE OF UNICEF

1. As custodian of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UNICEF is uniquely placed to work with governments in sustaining the realization of child rights during shocks and stresses. UNICEF has the convening power to bring together the government, civil society, donor community and other partners, to lead the advocacy dialogue for more adaptive social services, to place priorities related to the safety and well-being of children and women high on the agenda.

2. UNICEF’s mandate allows the organization to work across the humanitarian-development divide and across sectors, to address multisectoral risks and support the delivery of essential services to the most vulnerable children, while building national system’s capacity for a sustainable impact.

3. UNICEF is a partner of choice to strengthen resilience for children, families, communities and systems. UNICEF strengthens resilience with a focus on child wellbeing and survival, while recognizing that this cannot be achieved without enabling governments, civil society, communities and families to protect the most vulnerable. As a development and humanitarian organization present before, during and after emergencies, and with a multi-sector mandate encompassing service delivery as well as policy and advocacy, UNICEF is well placed to strengthen resilience for children, families, communities and systems alike.
FUNDING NEEDS

The Funding need amounts to $355.2 million and is set out below for each of the eight focus countries to support a scaled life-saving, cross-sectoral and resilience response. UNICEF and partners need $355.2 million over the next six months to safeguard and protect the lives of over 10 million children now and in the future. If these funds are not raised, there will be little hope of changing the dire situation facing these children and their families in the Central Sahel and Coastal Countries.

Humanitarian for Action Immediate needs across the L2 Sahel in 2022

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Child Protection, GBVIE and PSEA</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Emergency Preparedness and Response</th>
<th>Health and HIV and AIDS</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th>WASH</th>
<th>cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCC and AAP)</th>
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SAHEL EMERGENCY | Regional call to action
The following examples demonstrate the varied UNICEF interventions on the ground, which are a mix of preventative and direct response. The figures are estimates and may vary from country to country.

Approximately $20.3 million: could enable UNICEF Burkina Faso to provide integrated nutrition services including prevention of undernutrition to 560,950 pregnant and lactating women; vitamin A supplementation and de-worming to 3,385,000 children and treatment of wasting to 179,252 severely acute malnourished children.

Approximately $4.2 million: could enable UNICEF to provide healthcare services to 500,000 pregnant women across the Sahel, including insecticide treated anti-malarial bed nets, provision of multiple micronutrient supplementary medicine and family support planning services - interventions essential for preventing mother-to-be and baby from high risk disease and malnutrition.

Approximately $700,000: is needed in Ghana to secure continuous education and recreational initiatives in favour of 197,512 children and youth through the provision of critical supplies (including footballs, school bags, school-in-a-box) and enhanced capacity of schools clubs.

Approximately $500,000: could contribute to ensure the continuity of services for Ghanian children in situation of emergencies, including case management and alternative care services for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC).

Approximately $60,000: could contribute to providing cash transfer support to 10,000 Ghanaian people in need.

Approximately $100,000: can provide psycho-social support to 2,000 at risk children in a safe and child-friendly space for six months in Mali. This includes support to child survivor like Maimouna, 13, who was raped and is now an active child advocate in a child-friendly space set up in a village in northern Mali.

*Name changed to protect the child’s identity

Approximately $34.89 per annum: could fund the minimum prevention package for a child at risk of malnutrition aged 0 – 4 years old. This includes the provision of de-worming, essential vaccines, vitamin A, preventative zinc supplements and micronutrient powders to reduce diarrhoea and iron deficiency, providing regular support to the mother on breastfeeding and education on the best nutritious foods for the child.
SUMMARY

Childhood means much more than just the time between birth and adulthood – it is a time of milestones, growth, learning and play, and of hopes and dreams for the future. It should never be about gun shots, violence, hunger, disease, neglect and dreaming about when you can get your next drop of water or when you can go back to school with your friends.

By supporting UNICEF’s response to the Sahel crisis, you can help children to become more resilient, finding joy and hope amidst the most challenging situations. We will also be making progress with the Sustainable Development Goals. Left unchecked, emergencies – both sudden and enduring – can slow or even halt the progress of all 17 of the Goals. But with well-planned, well-funded and long-term responses, we can protect against that loss of progress. Indeed, when we locate and identify children previously neglected by development, we can even accelerate that progress.

UNICEF will be there for these children, helping to keep them safe for however long this crisis lasts and beyond. We will be helping them to rebuild their lives despite the crisis around them. You can be there for them too.

With your support, we can meet both the immediate and longer-term needs of children living in crisis, so that they don’t just survive, but thrive – no matter what their circumstances.
Radio-based learning gets its day in the sun in Mali | UNICEF

Persistent insecurity in central and northern Mali has helped fuel a protracted humanitarian crisis, disrupting access to education, health and other services, and displacing more than 300,000 people – more than half of them children.

COVID-19, has compounded the problem. Before the pandemic, direct threats and attacks on education had forced the closure of around 1,300 schools in central and northern regions. But pandemic-related measures shuttered schools across the country for most of 2020, leaving many of the most vulnerable young people unable to access education.

UNICEF has been distributing solar-powered radios in conflict-affected areas to vulnerable households and listening groups, where as many as 15 young people can make use of the same radio. The devices provide an educational lifeline for those who might otherwise be cut off from classes and complement the efforts of temporary learning spaces that have
The educational programmes that are broadcast are used not only by children who aren’t able to attend classes in person, but also those in school as an after-hours study resource.

Aichata says she tunes in every Wednesday and Thursday evening with her friends so they can study together.

“Before, I didn’t like grammar because I didn’t understand it and I found it difficult. But now I manage to get quite good marks, One time I got 8 out of 10 – I was really proud of myself!” she says.

Educo, a UNICEF partner in the central regions of Ségou and Mopti, is responsible for identifying households that could benefit from a radio, working closely with school management committees to distribute the radios and then monitoring the results.

“We make home visits to ensure that the children are using the radios, but also to see how their schooling is progressing,” says Dioukou Konate, head of Educo’s humanitarian project for the Ségou region during a follow-up visit with Aichata.

In the Ségou region alone, around 1,500 households have benefited from the solar-powered radios. These efforts are being amplified by listening groups supported by a community relay, typically a retired teacher, who can help keep students’ learning on track.

Makono and Aichata say they now feel well-integrated into their new schools – and both are doing well with their classes. In fact, Makono wants to become a teacher when he leaves school.

“My parents didn’t go to school, so sometimes when I don’t understand my lessons, I have to ask other people,” he says. “But I know that if I work hard in school, my parents can rely on me.”

Aichata hopes to eventually become a school principal so that she can help other children attend school.

“I know it’s ambitious to say that every child in Mali will go to school, but I’m sure that one day my dream will come true,” she says.
The time is now for you to act. For further information, please contact:

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