



Children wash their hands at a UNICEF-supported school in San Pedro, in southwest Côte d'Ivoire.

unicef   
for every child

## Humanitarian Action for Children

# West and Central Africa

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The West and Central Africa region is home to 67 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 37 million children. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is placing additional pressure on already overburdened social services, worsening the situation of vulnerable populations.
- The UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office will provide strategic guidance and technical support to countries in the region facing emergencies this will support programming in nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, education and social protection, as well as cross-cutting areas such as community engagement, resilience and emergency preparedness. To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF will support countries to prevent its spread; control and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic; and ensure continuity in the delivery of essential social services for women and children.
- UNICEF is appealing for US\$70.5 million to provide technical support for humanitarian assistance across the region, including to address the significant WASH and education needs; respond to the COVID-19 pandemic; and facilitate emergency preparedness and response in 2021. Seven countries are directly covered by this regional appeal.<sup>1</sup>

### IN NEED<sup>2</sup>



**4.9 million** children under 5 at risk of severe malnutrition<sup>3</sup>



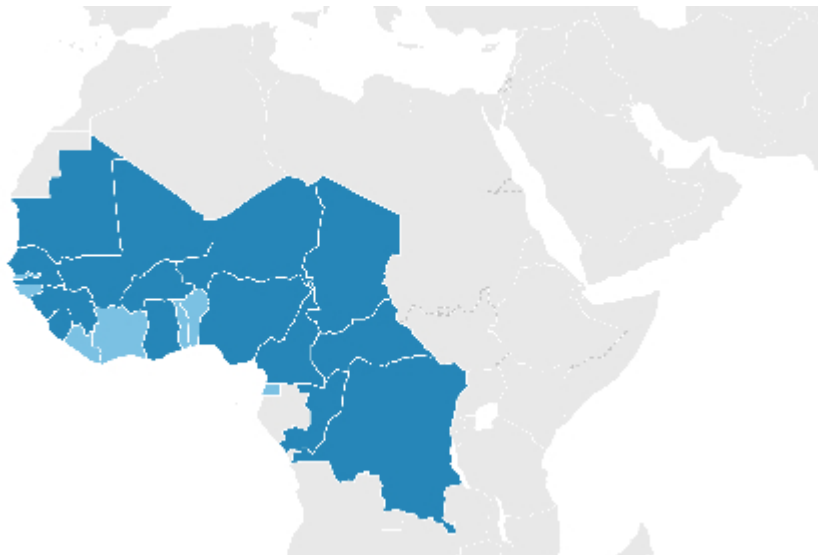
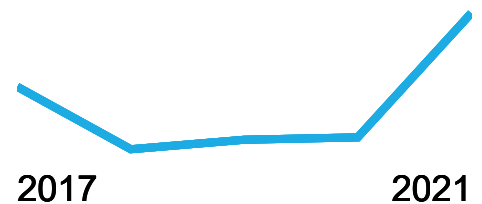
**30.5 million** people need WASH assistance<sup>4</sup>



**30 million** children need education assistance<sup>5</sup>

### FUNDING REQUIREMENTS<sup>21</sup>

**US\$ 70.5 million**



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are threatening to reverse the hard-earned development gains made in West and Central Africa in recent decades. The dramatic disruptions to child-centred social services have had major consequences for vulnerable children and their families. The region is home to 11 per cent of the world's children but accounts for 35 per cent of global under-five deaths; 42 per cent of maternal deaths; 30 per cent of unvaccinated children (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis 3); 19 per cent of stunted children and one third of all out-of-school children (primary and lower secondary).<sup>10</sup>

Conflicts in the Central Sahel – which are now at risk of spilling over into neighbouring coastal countries – the Lake Chad Basin, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon, have led to massive population displacement, both internally and across borders. Over 10.9 million people are displaced, including 6 million children who have been uprooted from their homes.<sup>6</sup>

Across the region, 67 million people need humanitarian assistance, including 37 million children and over 33 million women.<sup>11</sup> The cumulative effects of climate change, violence and the COVID-19 pandemic have left more than 4.9 million children under 5 years at risk of severe acute malnutrition (SAM).<sup>8</sup> Education remains under threat across the region. COVID-19 and the measures taken to respond to it have temporarily quadrupled the number of children who are out of school. Some 128 million children are newly out of school (pre-primary to upper secondary), in addition to the 41 million children (primary to lower secondary) who were already out of school.<sup>9</sup> Across the region, 30.5 million people now urgently need WASH assistance.<sup>7</sup> The region is seeing recurrent disease outbreaks, including of Ebola, cholera and measles. Many countries face regular risks of natural hazards such as flooding and landslides, which are exacerbated by climate change and deforestation.<sup>12</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

The UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office humanitarian strategy focuses on two priorities. First, UNICEF will improve the quality and coverage of its humanitarian response through innovative multi-country partnerships with governments, United Nations agencies and local, regional and international organizations to achieve results at scale. UNICEF will increase engagement in social protection, including humanitarian cash transfers; improve accountability to affected populations in line with Grand Bargain commitments;<sup>13</sup> and strengthen data, new technologies, feedback mechanisms and monitoring. Second, UNICEF will link humanitarian action and development programming by strengthening national and local capacities and systems to build resilience; and invest in the preparedness of country offices and partners.

The Regional Office will support country offices to develop risk-informed, conflict-sensitive programmes. Country offices will receive strategic guidance and technical support for programming in nutrition, health, WASH, child protection, education, and integrating cross-cutting aspects such as community engagement, resilience, social protection, advocacy and preparedness. UNICEF will support integrated approaches to preventing and treating acute malnutrition by offering a continuum of care for children and mothers and emphasizing prevention, early detection and treatment through health facilities and community-based platforms. WASH interventions will address waterborne diseases, including cholera, contribute to preventing undernutrition, and provide basic services for people affected by emergencies. Access to water in health facilities and schools will be prioritized. In child protection, UNICEF will prioritize children associated with armed groups, victims of sexual violence, children who are detained and children separated from their families, while monitoring grave violations and providing mental health and psychosocial support. UNICEF will scale up alternative learning platforms and pathways to provide quality basic education for vulnerable children and adolescents through digital, radio and television channels, and through trainings on psychosocial support, conflict and disaster risk reduction.

## STORY FROM THE FIELD



Like thousands of children in Benin, Miracle-Euclide is stuck at home due to the COVID-19 outbreak and resulting school closures.

UNICEF has supported the National Institute for Education Research and Training to help students like Miracle-Euclide continue their studies. Students are able to follow their classes at home through their televisions.

While Miracle-Euclide misses being able to play with his friends, he is happy to not be missing out on his education.

[Read more about this story here](#)

Miracle-Euclide, a student in Benin, continues his studies at home thanks to UNICEF-supported education programming.

# COVID-19 REGIONAL RESPONSE

Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo

## HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (COVID-19)

West and Central Africa has been hit hard by COVID-19. Health care systems were overstretched before the pandemic due to outbreaks of measles, malaria, cholera and polio (vaccine-derived poliovirus) and high malnutrition rates; and the pandemic has placed added pressure on already overburdened social and health service delivery systems.

A recent UNICEF-World Food Programme (WFP) joint analysis on the impact of food insecurity and COVID-19 on children's nutritional status showed that the number of children with acute malnutrition will increase by 19 per cent across West and Central Africa if nothing is done. Before the pandemic, an estimated 270,000 children under 5 years were severely malnourished in the seven countries covered in this appeal. This figure may rise to 305,000 due to food insecurity and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.<sup>15</sup> Health services have been severely disrupted and coverage for the most important childhood vaccines, specifically pentavalent 3, has decreased by 6 per cent compared with the same period in 2019, leaving over 73,000 additional children unvaccinated.<sup>16</sup> In the seven countries included in this appeal, 3.7 million children were out of school at the beginning of 2020; and due to school closures, an additional 14.7 million children are now out of school.<sup>14</sup>

## HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY (COVID-19)

The UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office strategy for responding to COVID-19 is focused on controlling the outbreak and mitigating the secondary impacts of the pandemic, including disruptions to essential social services for children, women and vulnerable populations. UNICEF will reinforce coordination at the regional level to support rapid humanitarian response; lead risk communication and community engagement efforts; and co-lead, with the World Health Organization (WHO), the operational coordination group to support government efforts for national COVID-19 preparedness and response plans, including procurement services. In WASH, UNICEF will support coordination, implementation and monitoring of WASH services and infection prevention and control in health care facilities, schools, markets and other public spaces. UNICEF remains active in surveillance, epidemiological investigation and case investigation, and will provide guidance on how to use existing community-based platforms and initiatives (e.g., child-friendly spaces, RapidPro) to strengthen community-based surveillance of COVID-19. UNICEF will continue efforts to prevent and address the socio-economic impacts of the outbreak, including by assessing the impact of the outbreak on essential services such as routine maternal and child health, nutrition, education and child protection services, and addressing the stigma that survivors may face in their communities. UNICEF will also work to strengthen social protection systems and make them more shock-responsive and child-sensitive. Particular efforts will be made to include young people in identifying and developing responses to their needs.

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports:

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/wca/situation-reports>

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

## 2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS<sup>17</sup>



### Nutrition

- **37,062** children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment
- **317,820** primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



### Health

- **1,122,450** children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against measles



### Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **310,824** people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene
- **2,635,776** people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services



### Child protection, GBViE and PSEA<sup>18</sup>

- **210,599** children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- **99,900** people with access to safe channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse
- **126,800** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions



### Education<sup>19</sup>

- **6,566,475** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **554,942** children receiving individual learning materials



### Social protection and cash transfers

- **88,500** households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors



### C4D, community engagement and AAP

- **13,719,390** people reached with messages on access to services
- **3,360,930** people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change

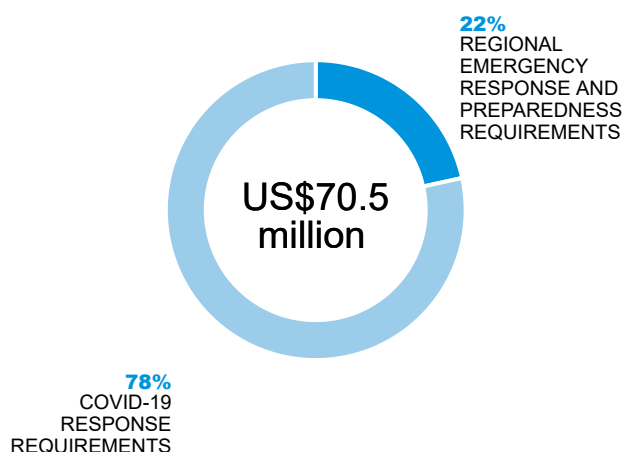
# FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is appealing for US\$70.5 million to respond to the humanitarian crises affected West and Central Africa in 2021, where violence, insecurity and population displacement are rising.

Given the complexity of the COVID-19 emergency, and the speed with which the virus has spread across the region, UNICEF urgently requires flexible resources to support more efficient and effective humanitarian response in West and Central Africa. UNICEF is appealing for US\$55.3 million to address COVID-19-related humanitarian needs in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo in 2021.

UNICEF is also requesting US\$15.2 million to provide technical support, emergency preparedness and response in the region. This includes US\$4.5 to support preparedness in at-risk countries and regional supply hubs. UNICEF will scale up preparedness efforts in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, all of which are affected by the spillover effects of the large-scale emergency in the Central Sahel. In addition, US\$6.3 million is needed to support emergency response in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo.

UNICEF is grateful to all donors who generously supported the response in West and Central Africa in 2020, including the response to COVID-19, and helped UNICEF and partners meet the overwhelming humanitarian needs of children, their families and communities across the region. Due to increased school closures and the need to step up health services linked to COVID-19, significant additional funds are needed to support safe back-to-school efforts, health care services and WASH activities, including WASH in schools and health centres. This funding will also help to protect the continuity of essential social services for women and children. Continued timely, flexible and predictable resources will be instrumental to the organization's ability to address the pressing humanitarian needs of children and women in 2021.



Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
<b>Regional emergency response and preparedness requirements</b>	<b>15,203,372</b>
Emergency response	6,342,286
Preparedness and disaster reduction	4,502,286
Regional office technical capacity	4,358,800
<b>COVID-19 response requirements</b>	<b>55,324,958</b>
Nutrition	4,462,153
Health	6,265,146
Water, sanitation and hygiene	12,690,805
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	5,115,196 <sup>20</sup>
Education	17,667,820
Social protection and cash transfers	6,792,204
C4D, community engagement and AAP	2,331,634
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,528,330</b>

## Who to contact for further information:

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## ENDNOTES

1. The seven countries directly covered by this regional appeal are Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Togo.
2. The "in need" figures reflect pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports for all countries in the region.
3. This is a UNICEF calculation based on a UNICEF/WFP joint analysis conducted in May 2020 on the impact of food insecurity and COVID-19 on children's nutritional status.
4. This is a UNICEF calculation using the 2020 revised humanitarian response plans for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria; and the January 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Central African Republic. This includes the 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeals for the Congo and Mauritania.
5. This is a UNICEF calculation based on 2020 humanitarian response plan revisions and provisional figures from drafts 2021 humanitarian needs overviews, government statistics and administrative data.
6. This is a UNICEF calculation based on data on internally displaced persons and refugees aggregated from June-August 2020 reports of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
7. This is a UNICEF calculation using the 2020 revised humanitarian response plans for Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria; and the January 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Central African Republic. This includes the 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeals for the Congo and Mauritania.
8. This is a UNICEF calculation based on a UNICEF/WFP joint analysis conducted in May 2020 on the impact of food insecurity and COVID-19 on children's nutritional status.
9. This is a UNICEF calculation based on multiple indicator cluster survey and demographic and health survey data from 2018 and government school enrolment data collected in March 2020.
10. United Nations Children's Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, 'Regional Office Annual Report 2019', UNICEF, 2020.
11. Ibid.
12. All figures on humanitarian need in this section refer to all 24 countries in the West and Central Africa region, while the UNICEF programme targets focus only on the seven countries that are included in this regional appeal.
13. The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.
14. This is a UNICEF calculation based on multiple indicator cluster survey and demographic and health survey data from 2018 and government school enrolment data collected in March 2020.
15. This is a UNICEF calculation based on a UNICEF/WFP joint analysis conducted in May 2020 on the impact of food insecurity and COVID-19 on children's nutritional status.
16. Routine administrative data from ministries of health.
17. This section reflects the consolidated targets of the countries included in the regional appeal only.
18. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).
19. Other needs will be address through the sector response and by governments in the seven countries included in the regional appeal.
20. The child protection funding request includes US\$1.4 million for the gender-based violence response.
21. The West and Central Africa Regional Office 2017 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal includes 2017 funding requirements for Burkina Faso, the Congo, Mauritania and the Lake Chad Basin.